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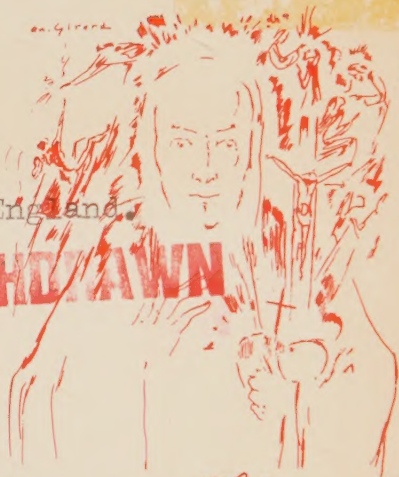

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A HISTORY OF ENGLAND

BY

HILAIRE BELLOC

VOL. III

CATHOLIC ENGLAND: III. THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

A.D. 1348–1525

WITH TWELVE MAPS

METHUEN & CO. LTD.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

First Published in 1928

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE TO THE THIRD VOLUME

THIS, the Third Volume of my "History of England," takes the reader from the Black Death to the end of the Middle Ages; which may best be put in the story of this country at the moment when—as it would seem in the summer of 1525—Anne Boleyn and King Henry VIII came to their arrangement.

It is true, of course, that the mediæval system in thought and society had been passing long before, and that, by 1525, one is in the heart of a new world. But the case of England is a peculiar one, out of all Europe. In England the religion which had formed her society along with that of all Christendom, was artificially interrupted; after that interruption the country was never more the same. Therefore to take as a terminus the beginnings of the Reformation in this country (though they are late) is a natural division; just as the Battle of Hastings (though coming late compared with the General European origin of the Middle Ages) is for England a turning-point.

In the volume which I here put before the reader there are not a few points in which he will find statements and arguments of a sort to which he is in general unaccustomed; that is, things set forth which are not those of the official text-books; and for this, as in the case of my first and second volumes, I must in this preface present a certain apology.

The principal of these is the presentation of Parliament in those days as something of a totally different nature from what we mean by Parliament to-day. Accustomed as we are to hear about "constitutional developments," "parliamentary title to a throne," "constitutional action," and all the rest of it, we forget that such ideas were utterly unknown to the Middle Ages. The government of England in the later Middle Ages was a popular monarchy, violently disputed as between the individual claimants, but never as to the character of its office. Beneath it, often reacting against it, but (like everybody else) accepting it at heart, was a group of very powerful men who as time went on were less and less feudal chiefs and more and more wealthy intriguers. Side by side with this method of government was the all-pervading influence of the Church, which was universal throughout Christendom and was the source of all Christian culture. In such a scheme the "Commons" —a couple of gentry summoned irregularly and for brief periods from each county, a few lawyers and monied merchants similarly called up from the towns in order to consult about special subsidies—took no very great place. They had their function, but it was not the thing of which men thought much when they considered the Government of England. Therefore to regard the period as one to be expressed in terms of Parliamentary development or to present Parliament as a major organ to the State, is unhistorical. It is "reading history backwards." That is, unconsciously thinking of the past in terms of modern times. What we call the "Parliamentary System" arose in England as a belated result of the Reformation. It represented the success of the richer classes in their quarrel with the universal national crown, and ultimately their power to destroy that crown. Its first origins are to be discovered after the dissolution of the monasteries and the looting of religion by

the wealthier classes had changed the centre of economic gravity in England, and had made the squires, and their colleagues the wealthy men of the towns, stronger than their king.

Next, the reader will note that I have made the Black Death a deciding factor in the corruption and decline of the Middle Ages. Europe, and especially England, were after the middle of the xvth century greatly changed from what they had been during the True Middle Ages. I support the view that, in the main, this was on account of the pestilence.

This theory of course is none of mine ; it has been put forward for now half a century with an increasing force, and has been so long before the mind of historians that there has been time for some reaction to arise against it. To attribute to the Black Death *alone* the great change between the true and the later Middle Ages would be folly indeed. The change is already beginning to show in the transformed character of society in France and in the transformed character of papal policy and reputation. Well before the Black Death the xivth century had already presented a succession of French Popes and an altered tone in the attitude of the Pontiffs of Avignon from what had been that of the great mediæval Popes—resident in, or driven from, but always associated with, Rome. The very clothes and habits of men showed the change coming. But in a brief and general outline it is essential to emphasise what is the chief factor in each considerable development ; and undoubtedly the chief factor of the great turn-over from the early to the later Middle Ages was, especially in this country, the Black Death.

I have in connection with this also emphasised what our text-books much neglect, and that is the rapid change in the language of Englishmen at the outset of the later Middle

Ages. The thing we call English became the national tongue with the last generation of the XIVth century. There had been no such national tongue before.

Here, again, the critic may advance endless modifications of so general and simple a statement; yet that statement is the main truth. Those patriots rather than historians who prefer the illusion of English as a tongue spoken by Alfred, preserved through the centuries, slowly and gradually changing into its modern form, but always and essentially one with its past, will disagree. Those who are familiar with the long survival of French among the upper classes, well on into the mid-XVth century, may criticise my putting the great change so early. The French of the English governing classes lingered much longer than the average reader of history has any conception of. All through the XVth century you find it in pockets, as it were—especially at court. There is continual indication that men are bi-lingual where one would least expect them to be, and it is worth remarking that in the same French language follow, like links in a chain, the familiar writing of William of Wykeham, of Henry IV, and, a century later, of Henry VIII in his love-making with Anne Boleyn: while after Flodden the younger Howard writes to the king of the battle, not in English but in French. The old tradition of a bi-lingual society with French as the mark of its governing class died very slowly indeed.

But I believe my statement in the main to be true: a new amalgamated language, made of the old dialects and French, arose after the Black Death and became the general medium of national expression after 1400, welding the nation together.

Yet another point in what I have written which will receive, and may deserve, criticism is a continual insistence upon the importance attached during the Middle Ages to

the Blood-Royal. Yet if one does not recognise how much was thought of this, one can never understand the time. The idea to-day is absent from our political thought. We find it difficult, therefore, to stand in the shoes of those Englishmen of 500 years ago to whom the Lancastrian usurpation was a shocking thing and whose passions in the struggle of the Civil War following it were so violently aroused by the claims of right.

I have, of course, throughout the volume, maintained an attitude hostile to the old official Whig caricature of the past, wherein any revolt of wealthy men against the Crown is praised, and all efforts at strengthening Popular Monarchy against such wealthy men is blamed. But I do not think I have exaggerated the claims of Popular Monarchy in these struggles. Occasionally a disloyal faction would obtain considerable support, notably in London, and there were rebellions which had large minorities of the country behind them : or at any rate, of such part of the country as was free to move and to take up arms.

But like a pendulum swinging across a vertical standard, like waves oscillating below and above a certain mean level, all these movements were functions of that central Popular Monarchy which was dominant in the mediæval mind. It is *that* institution which must be emphasised ; for it is *that* institution the idea of which the modern mind has lost.

There is one last negative point I should like to make in connection with this volume. I have not in it emphasised the general character of European civilisation as the background against which all the island history should be read. I regret that I have not done so ; but I think a successful achievement of such a task within such limits would be impossible. One can but allude to the degradation of the Papacy, the Great Schism, the corruption of the older mediæval Church, the formation of the new monarchies and

of the nations which they governed. For if the general story of Europe were presented, there would be no room for the particular story of England. Still I could not help feeling as I wrote what a pity it was that such limitations forbade a just proportion in the narrative. For instance, the fall of Constantinople, the great advance of Turkish power, threatening the very heart of Europe, were vastly more important directly to our race and indirectly to the people of this country, than the Wars of the Roses; yet if the story of the Wars of the Roses has to be told within such limits as these, the shaking of Europe by the Turkish victories could only be mentioned, not developed.

Certain other lesser points in the book which might challenge criticism, such as the comparative value of money, the death-rate during the Great Plague, the numbers of armies, the legitimacy of the Tudor family, and a score of others, I will leave to the reader to judge; for I have, in each of these cases, advanced ample argument and authority for the positions I hold.

H. BELLOC

King's Land, Shipley,
Horsham, *November*, 1927

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CATHOLIC ENGLAND:

III. THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

A.D. 1348—A.D. 1525

INTRODUCTION TO THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

CATHOLIC ENGLAND

Introduction to the Later Middle Ages

A HISTORY OF ENGLAND

INTRODUCTION TO THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

I TURN in this, the third volume of my History, to England in the later Middle Ages. I make of this a separate volume, because the period has a marked character of its own, and because we misunderstand the great change in Europe at the Renaissance and Reformation, if we see it as following immediately upon the full life of the mediæval world. There intervened that strange mixture of advancing invention and declining virtue, of decaying institutions and growing material knowledge, of inflamed imagination, side by side with added experience, new instruments, and slowly expanding commerce and discovery which are the accompaniments of a great culture drawing towards its close.

The general history of Christendom and the particular history of England is divided, as we have seen, into three main periods: the Pagan, the Catholic, and the period of disruption following upon the Reformation.

The Catholic period—a matter of a thousand years—falls into two main divisions: the Dark Ages and the Middle —the former running, in this country, roughly to the Norman Conquest, or a little earlier, and the latter, the Middle Ages, roughly from somewhat before the Norman Conquest, or the Conquest itself, to the beginnings of the Reformation in 1525.

This last division, the Middle Ages, bears throughout certain characteristics which through all its changes make it recognisable and differentiate it from the Dark Ages which

preceded it, but far more from the period of disruption which comes after. We know, by the character of architecture, of clothing, of allusions to the structure of society, whether we may call a thing or a document mediæval or no. We perceive, throughout, the power of the Papacy, the hierarchical structure of society, very active enquiry upon intellectual things (different from and superior to the mere routine of the Dark Ages in such matters), great movements of men and armies, of pilgrimages, and of approaches to the seats of learning—and many other characteristic features.

But what is not so generally recognised, what is hardly ever insisted upon in our popular histories, is the very important truth that the Middle Ages themselves fall into two well-defined divisions: an earlier, which we also may call the true Middle Ages, lasting roughly from the middle of the XIth to the middle of the XIVth centuries, a period of 300 years; a later, from the middle of the XIVth century to the turmoil of the Reformation, a matter of close upon two centuries. It is true, of course, of these two divisions of the Middle Ages that they merge one into the other, and that an exact dividing line cannot be drawn. But this will apply to any contrast in history. Contrasts are, none the less, vivid, and the contrast here—that between the earlier and true Middle Ages and their decline in their last 200 years—it is of particular importance to seize, not only in the general history of Europe, but more especially in that of this country, England, where the contrast was more marked and its effect on our judgment of the nation's story more pronounced.

A parallel may help us to understand how distinctly the later Middle Ages stand separate from the earlier.

We all know what is meant by the spirit and the external appearance of the XVIIIth century, and what a sharp contrast they present with the XIXth. Here, also, there is no exact dividing line; but there is a barrier-belt between them, not very wide—that of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. We see Europe as one kind of thing on one side of

the barrier, and as another kind of thing on the other side. Beyond the barrier are the dynastic rivalries, the coloured and varied dress of men, the wig, the conventional sword at a gentleman's side, the social ritual, the classic literary ideal of the men between Dryden and Wordsworth : the contemporaries of Pope, of Johnson, of Voltaire. On the hither side are the sombre uniformity of costume, the national passions, the efforts at democracy, the Parliamentary experiments, the vast and rapid progress of physical science, the mechanical transformation of our world. You cannot say, " The one ended, the other began " with the fall of the Bastille or with Waterloo. But you can say, " Here are two worlds, and the transition from the one to the other was brief."

In the same way, though the contrast is very different in quality, there lies between the earlier or true Middle Ages, and the period of their decline, the later Middle Ages, a barrier of some twenty years or more, which begins a year or two before the central date of the century, 1350, and is coming to a close in 1370 and the succeeding years.

Now in this belt which divides two pictures of Christendom there falls, at the beginning of it, after the year 1347, for Western Europe as a whole, and in 1348 for England, one capital, decisive event : the Black Death.

Of how great its effect was we may judge later ; but the point for us to note upon our first approach to the period is, that, whether as a landmark of the change or as a cause of the change (and it was very much more of a cause than modern criticism is yet prepared to admit), the enormous catastrophe of the Black Death is our point of departure. A plague fell on Europe such as had never been known before. It fell with an intensity and a suddenness as amazing as its volume ; and things were never more the same.

Up to the Black Death, although society is full of change, and although much that had been noblest and most warm with life in the true Middle Ages is already beginning to

grow old and harden, although the germs of later evils and developments are already apparent, the original tradition continues: then falls the mighty blow. At first society is stunned. Some few years pass and you begin to note change very rapidly accelerating. Within a lifetime Europe is another thing. Europe is not another thing in the sense that it has suffered a transformation of its inmost nature, for its religion remains united and informing the whole. There is no loss of the past such as came later to those societies, notably our own, which fell away from religious unity. Europe, after the Black Death, is not another thing in the sense that it is broken, as was Christendom, by the failure to maintain its unity after the XVIth century; but Europe is, after the Black Death, another thing in the sense that its colour and tone have changed. Simplicity disappears, and some part of the old certitude. The externals of life, ornament, dress, delineation are becoming here exquisite, there fantastic. Authority is shaken and falls into a defensive attitude, sometimes querulous and at last even savage.

On this account have I taken the Black Death as the close of the one period and the beginning of the other. No one can properly survey that united Christendom of the 500 years prior to its dissolution without seeing in the midst of it this dark chasm of the great pestilence; on the earlier side of which is a scheme of society still simple and standing in a strong clear light as of day; on the other, a scheme in part obscured and played upon by strange transforming lights: vivid hues as of artificial fires in a gloom.

The Middle Ages would have declined in any case: they were fatigued and were growing old; but the process was at once accelerated and warped by the Black Death. Change would have come; but that it came so rapidly and with such force, and—if I may use the phrase—with such a "twist," we must set down to that exceeding Plague.

To go so far as to call the Black Death the ultimate cause

of the Reformation is an error. The ultimate cause of that tragedy lay in the minds of men, not in material things. Even in the story of England it is false to seek in a material cause the root of those accidents which preceded the loss of the Faith: the spiritual fever which broke out at the end of the XIVth century, the Lancastrian usurpation, the final ruin of the Plantagenets,—all these came not from worldly accidents, but from within. Yet was it the Black Death which opened the door to what followed it here in England: sporadic heresy, repression, abominable civil wars destroying the chivalry of the past, the loss of the old national dynasty, and at last a brief tyrannical Tudor kingship which destroyed itself by its own act, when it enriched its gentry with the spoils of murdered religion.

If it be asked why the high importance of the Black Death was for so long ill-recognised, the answer is that the social organism of the Middle Ages was too strong for even such a blow to produce in it breaches of structure immediately apparent. Though stunned, as I have said, the edifice of Christendom did not totter under the blow, still less did it break.

Again, the magnitude of the event is masked by the fact that the same legal and social terms were used before as after it. Men thought before and after it in the same fashion. Therefore the real effects of the disaster were hidden. The Black Death might be said, by a metaphor, to resemble a shock which at first seems to have left but little effect upon a man, yet to which can soon be traced the arising in him of a mortal disease.

Moreover, so far as this country was concerned, the pageantry of Edward III's great wars half conceals the larger event; and historians, affected by the chroniclers who watched that pageantry, missed the monstrous social trouble which lay behind the military show. Further, it must be remarked that the Black Death was not something unique, but only one of a whole series of its own kind, though so

much exceeding the others as to produce a different result. Had the Black Death been unique, had grave pestilence been unknown to our fathers, and its prodigious blow fallen unexpected, it would have affected the imagination of all so strongly that its true place in history would long have been fixed. It would have counted for more in our text-books than any battle since Hastings, or than any mediæval event in England prior to Thomas Cromwell's breach with Rome. But it was not unique of its kind ; though excessive in degree, and vastly excessive, contemporaries did not put it into another category from previous epidemics, nor did posterity regard it as something different in kind from later and lesser visitations.

Yet was the Black Death all I have said, and it produced the effect it did because it was an example of that *just too much* which so often makes a thing decisive. It was like the extra degree of heat which provokes a chemical change. The scourge of 1348 and the succeeding years was *just more* than the social health of our Western World, and particularly of England, could stand. Therefore it was that it so strongly affected the generations coming after it and made them different.

One excellent proof of the way in which the plague changed our world is the long misapprehension into which modern men have fallen upon the nature of the true Middle Ages previous to the middle XIVth century. One might almost say that our chief historical task to-day is the rediscovery of Europe as it was between the Black Death and the First Crusade ; for our ideas of the Middle Ages are still in the main, and till lately were universally, drawn not from their healthy and vigorous youth, but from their later phase after the pestilence.

Consider all the external things which were thought " mediæval " by the mid-XIXth century, by its popular historians and romancers—both those favourable to the past and those unfavourable to it.

It was (in their eyes) a time of architecture loaded with grotesque or elaborate detail, of plate armour, of detailed and exquisite miniature painting, of a quaint English interspersed here and there with fragments of French ; of complicated stained glass, of strikingly picturesque and changing fashion in the dress of the wealthy, of a very sharp differentiation between laity and clergy, of a highly developed and multiple heraldry, of vivid and sometimes even morbid colour, of perpetual vigilant suspicion against, and repression of, heresy, of a perpetual burning of heretics as a leading feature, of exceedingly futile metaphysical debate. But all that, distorted as it is, is not a distortion of the earlier Middle Ages, it is a distortion and an exaggeration of the Middle Ages in their decline ; of the Middle Ages after the Black Death. The true Middle Ages, the first great 300 years, are especially marked by simplicity, a sort of starkness : things made for use : direct effort. They are the time of chain armour, adding to it only such additions as were produced by strict necessity ; of a plain, admitted, and secure social system easily functioning upon one plan ; of heraldry practised for the sake of recognition in battle ; of popular and few symbols ; of the severe geometrical line in architecture ; in philosophy, of profound and vital discussion—what is more, of arrival at fixed conclusions, a triumph which we to-day can hardly conceive.

It is well, in order to appreciate the difference between the earlier and the later Middle Ages, to tabulate briefly the chief points of the contrast.

1. The earlier Middle Ages from, say, Edward the Confessor's youth in the XIth century, up to the time of men living in the first part of the XIVth century (1030-1350), the manhood of Edward III, were *Feudal.*

The relations between a man and his vassal, between the lord and his tenant, servile or free, between the king or bishop and the towns which owed them service and revenue —the whole structure of society was on a known model,

familiar to all ; and (this is an important point) its structure and character were consonant with the terms, legal and social, by which it expressed itself—words corresponded to things. In the later Middle Ages the feudal expressions continue, but the feudal thing is rapidly disappearing. The serf is no longer a serf, though his original conditions linger on much longer in some parts of the continent than in others. In England particularly the fundamental relation between the lord of the manor and his tenant, especially his servile tenant, changes altogether. The old words are maintained —becoming less and less applicable to realities. The tenant, especially the servile tenant, of the earlier Middle Ages (the bulk of the population), owed service and dues in kind : his descendants commute these more and more for a money payment. The king of the earlier Middle Ages was a feudal chief, and under him the lesser feudal chiefs holding of him had each a sort of monarchical power over his own lands. The military structure followed that scheme exactly, and fitted in with it. In the later Middle Ages the military structure has changed, though the old feudal terms remain. Bodies semi-feudal are still levied during the Wars of the Roses, though the power of hiring soldiers with money counts more than the power of summoning them by social obedience ; but in the end, before the Middle Ages are over, the feudal levy has disappeared.

2. The vernacular languages take root.

This powerful agent of change in all European society is of particularly strong effect in England, because England alone of all the European realms, from being divided between two sharply differing forms of speech (the French of the well-to-do and the jargons of the poor), became of one language. Latin, of course, remains the universal tongue of learning and of religion, therefore of philosophy and of the most universal thought. But the local popular languages out of which the great literatures of Europe were to grow, arising in the course of the earlier Middle Ages, have become strong structures throughout its later part.

It is side by side with this growth of the vernaculars, the making official, so to speak, and fixed, of what had been no more than popular dialects, that there arises slowly through the later Middle Ages the feeling of nationality expressed in the new kingship and the separate identity of each realm, first very dim, then more conscious under the universal authority of Christendom.

3. There is the contrast of which I have already made mention more than once, between simplicity and complexity, between unconscious and direct action, and action contemplating itself and in peril of turning theatrical. It is not only a contrast between simplicity and complexity ; it is also a contrast between growing technical skill and the older relics of crudity—sincere, but childish and barbaric. In sculpture we shall perhaps never reach again the heights of the XIIIth century ; but the later XIVth and the XVth centuries have a subtlety in expression and divination of the soul in its infinite moods which the XIIIth had not.

In painting, the contrast is far more striking. There is a movement, at first slow, rapidly increasing in volume, away from convention, towards exactitude of reproduction, towards multiplicity of detail, and towards what we think to-day (at least in the arts) to be the representation of reality. One might put it by saying that painting became more and more mimetic, copying exactly what was before it : less symbolic ; and yet the later mediæval painting, growing into that of the Renaissance, had, oddly enough, more vision than the thing out of which it came. To use a term which has grown half ridiculous, but is exact, it yearned ; and it tried to fulfil its yearning. The exquisite landscapes of the XVth century, more and more exquisite, as the time proceeds, in their tiny detailed work, are a triumph.

Meanwhile architecture takes on a greater phantasy, and so does the dress of man, exaggerated in its efforts at surprise.

4. A contrast more difficult to assess, yet governing the whole, is the contrast in human mood. The later Middle

Ages are filled with doubt which is emotional, with touches of despair, and often with something of that mundane indifference which is the product of despair. The thing is so difficult to express that I despair of expressing it, but you see it in the faces, you find it in the literature—not universally, but sporadically ; above all, you find it in the actions of men. The strong Catholic code by which our Europe lived was still universally admitted, but it was less and less universally acted upon. By which I do not merely mean there were lapses from it—such there were at all times—I mean rather that a certain cynicism and routine had come into the practice of those lapses. But from a vague, intangible, though deplorably effective change of mood, so difficult to set down in words, let me pass to its main effect, the great contrast of all :—

5. The contrast in the condition of the Church.

One might put this most generally by saying that the structure of religion, which had been living and elastic in the earlier Middle Ages, was becoming, in the later, a thing of routine, which hardened. On the financial side especially was this apparent ; while, side by side with this went the loosening of the framework of authority by the partial failure of the Papacy, and to some extent by the degradation of monasticism—in certain cases and provinces, extreme.

As for the financial side of the Church, where it came into the daily life of all men (as it constantly did) it grew more and more out of touch with the realities of Christian life. Legal charges, burial dues, tithes, fees for marriage and baptism and licences, services and rents to clerical bodies and officials as lords of manors, grew to appear, to those who paid them, a burden less and less related to the spiritual life. And as these evils increased in the mind of the lay masses who paid, corresponding evils increased in the recipients of these innumerable sums. What had formerly been a simple and necessary endowment for the avowed and realised object of supporting the priesthood and the sacramental mysteries

of which the priesthood were the agents and stewards, tended to become a mere system of revenue. Before the Middle Ages reached their close you have the endowment of bishoprics, of parishes, of great monastic institutions, treated as dead sources of income to be attached to this man or that, by favour or even purchase. Often the beneficed man was a layman, or a clerk not concerned with the duties of the office. At the same time arose a development novel, in scale at least, which we can clearly put down to the Black Death; an immense increase in the sums set apart for Masses for the dead. The disproportion between such sums and other endowment, the great number of priests it occupied, were to produce effects most ill. There came to be a sort of exaggerated pre-occupation with death.

There is a sense, of course, in which this pre-occupation cannot be exaggerated. To recognise the supreme importance of death, to face it, allow for it, provide for it, is the very mark of Catholicism. The Mass is the supreme sanction of that pre-occupation. But such endowment at the expense of other charities, connected in the public mind too often with mere wealth, contrasting with lives sceptical and debauched, becoming, as it were, one of the fashions of the rich and perpetually extending, was an irritant. The normal and rightful endowments of Masses for the souls of the dead became something of an obsession. While the Black Death had lessened the numbers of the clergy (we shall see in a later chapter how severely and how permanently) the clerical incomes remained, and they now were greatly swelled, especially towards the end of the period, by this fixed habit of leaving large legacies for the Masses to be sung for the souls of the wealthy dead. These sums left by the wealthy for the Sacrifice of the Altar to be offered in expiation had obviously no evil or novel doctrinal effect. In themselves they were all to the good. No poor man felt himself offended by them or his own case before heaven the worse. But they added an ill-proportioned excess to the clerical revenues.

Another element was added to the growing evils of the time in the matter of the Church. The Black Death had suddenly and severely lowered the standard of instruction among the clergy. The necessity for hurriedly providing new incumbents was the cause, and we have case after case of complaint. The level of clerical education was permanently affected, and with it the prestige of the clergy and their discipline.

Again, as I have said, the monastic institution was wounded, not only by the decline of its numbers (coupled with the maintenance of its old revenues), but by the diversion of that revenue from its true purpose. Men less respected than of old were taking directly a larger proportion of the wealth produced by others, and the clash between the old tradition and the later experience bore very evil fruits.

Side by side with all this went the degradation of the Papacy. It had begun before the great change—and was one cause of it—in the transference of the seat of the Papacy from Rome to Avignon. After the effort of the German Emperors to make themselves masters of the Church had failed in the XIIIth century, the XIVth saw, at its very origin, the emigration of the Papal court from the Tiber to the Rhone. Respect for the Vicar of Christ and the living principle of unity was weakened when men thought of the Supreme Head as some one not wholly independent, but—in some degree—a sort of subject to the French realm. The Papacy became a French thing. And while it thus became localised, and by so much of less authority, its revenues prodigiously increased through an increase of centralisation and of legal activity. After a long lifetime the evil was aggravated by a violent schism. The Papacy had settled in Avignon before the first ten years of the XIVth century were over, 1309. Seventy years later that great saint, Catherine of Siena, had brought it back to Rome; but the habit of a long lifetime prevailed. A Pope returned to Rome and was accepted for a few months, but so far had the respect for the

office fallen that his own electors turned against him. A rival soon appeared, and for forty years Christendom was divided between the authority of two Popes, later even of three.

One manifest consequence of such an anomaly and disgrace in Christendom was the progressive weakening of the Papal Office. One Pope would outbid another to secure the support of this monarch and that. One set of European realms would be in one obedience, one in another, and the effort to increase either camp led the spiritual chief of it to every kind of bargain. To this deplorable chaos we owe the lay encroachment which everywhere threatened to create in the long run National Churches. Already Edward III had obtained complete right of nomination to great places in the Church as the price of his support of one Pope, and the conception of a hierarchy dependent upon the king was planted.

The schism further produced the dangerous, new, and happily transient attempt at substituting an oligarchy of general councils for the unquestioned, age-long monarchy of Peter: a substitution not affirmed but almost practised. Had it taken root there was an end of Christian unity. I have said that the schism lasted forty years. But the quarrel was not really settled till long after that. Technically, the schism lasted only from 1377 to 1417. In practice it lasted, in its elements of anti-popes and conciliar quarrels with the Holy See almost until the death of Eugene IV and the election of Nicholas V in the year 1447.[1] For a whole lifetime—the lifetime of such a man as Henry IV's half-brother, Cardinal Beaufort—men had grown accustomed to a despised and disputed Papacy.

After the quarrel was settled yet another evil appeared. The now united Papacy became, through the growth of the new nations, a localised power, no longer French, but

[1] Or even 1449 when the last anti-pope resigned.

perilously like a mere Italian principate. It came to be a court, through nepotism almost dynastic, heavily concerned with its own politics of territorial aggrandisement or defence.

One more factor of dissolution afflicted this time during all its earlier part—the Hundred Years War. It had arisen, indeed, before the Black Death, though long after the departure of the Popes for Avignon ; but it did not begin to affect the life of Western Christendom seriously till after the plague. The campaign of Crécy was not ruinous to population or wealth. The great and destructive marches and raids (Edward III's to Brétigny, the Black Prince's in the South and ending at Poitiers, the Massacre of Limoges, John of Gaunt's great march down France, the ceaseless local struggles by which the French recovered the Plantagenet conquests) all come after the Black Death. There followed, after too short an interval, the brilliant but exhausting campaign of Henry V, then the far more exhaustive and intense conflict between the Valois and the English crown, which was hardly ended at Chatillon. When the great Talbot fell before that place in July, 1453—the Turk was already in Constantinople and the Middle Ages were in their agony. The raiding and counter raiding, the looting, massacre, and burning had gone on, intermittently, for a century.

All this ruin of lives and things had taken place in what was the heart of Europe and the centre of its cultural tradition, France. It had come after the pestilence and, as it were, continued the evils of that horror. We read in our text-books of this battle and that, the recovery or loss of a town, the death of a leader. What we do not read, what we must visualise in order to appreciate the effect of such things upon the end of the Middle Ages, is the experience of the peasantry and townsfolk. Nearly all had seen great bands of pillagers passing and re-passing for three generations. All that great and central section of Western Europe had become familiar with almost unceasing misery and incertitude, pillage, fire, and violent death. We know what

later the Thirty Years War did to the Germans : the Hundred Years War may not have had so disastrous an effect on France, and indeed France was well on her feet at its close. But, combined with so much else, and coming in the very core of mediæval culture, it killed the Middle Ages. A man who had heard, in childhood, of the last Plantagenet losses on the Garonne, would have heard, in age, the news of Luther's protest. It was but one lifetime : nearly that of the Emperor Maximilian or Pope Julius II.

The Hundred Years War spared England—though it drained England of wealth. But in England, as France was recovering, the civil war of the nobles, the Wars of the Roses, came to add its share to the burden. It could not be compared for destructiveness with the great conflict in France : it had but three short campaigns, largely local. But it had a moral effect of exhaustion out of proportion to the mere loss in lives.

In all these ways, religious and lay, what had been the admirably proportioned, strong and adequate social structure of the Middle Ages, broke down.

But during that failure, and more and more as it proceeds, we are astonished to observe a vigorous growth of new things. And it is the fact that these new and vital things were pushing up so forcibly in the midst of decline and death which renders an appreciation of the times so difficult. To one man the end of the XIVth, and the whole of the XVth, centuries are a breaking of day, a broadening of the light, the birth of the modern world with all its arts and manner. To another they are the corruption and lamentable dissolution of the noble, the chivalric, the strongly founded Europe of our fathers.

The reader may see that, in my own judgment, ill and disease predominated, and this partly explains why the young life arising at the end of the Middle Ages, instead of making a new and happy Europe, warped and distorted our people into the disruption and chaos of the Reformation.

It is not always true that as one thing dies out another grows up to take its place. Sometimes, as in the case of the Mohammedan conquest, there is no transition whatsoever, but a violent clash; at other times, as in the case of the civilisation of the Euphrates and the Tigris valleys, there comes slow death. But with the Middle Ages we watch the singular process of the old becoming brittle and sere, and the new growing green and vigorous within the decaying sheath.

Side by side with the ageing and the dying of what had been the mediæval social scheme was arising, not only what we have already noticed, new arts, but a new scholarship and a new thirst for knowledge. Serious criticism of documents, begins to appear with the first years of the XVth century: paper, long known, spreads before the end of the XIVth; artillery used before the Black Death, ill understood till a generation after it, becomes a serious arm in the next lifetime and is the mainstay of the new kingships at the end of the age: it helps to destroy the last relics of feudal power. Printing, also of slow growth and at first insignificant, becomes a practical instrument of culture in the days which saw the end of Plantagenet rule in France: the first book in the new medium appears when Constantinople was falling and the Wars of the Roses were brewing. The re-discovery of ancient art begins, and of its principles in building. The XVth century found Madeira, just after Agincourt. Before it ended it had seen the American coasts and rounded the Capes of Africa into the Indian Ocean.

The truth is that the mediæval spirit, a product of its religion, had so great a strength of life within it that when the externals of an ancient culture began to decay, it was capable of bringing forth yet another world. For in nothing does the Catholic temper more contrast with its opponents than in its quality of hope: its permeation with the spirit of resurrection. It feels perpetually the continuance of life within itself, using, manipulating, never succumbing to

change. One of its chief antagonists[1] in our own day has well remarked that when an individual is sunk beyond bearing under the burden of his own conscience, he will, if he be a Catholic, take refuge in humility; but, if an anti-Catholic, in self-murder: of which alternative this critic would seem to approve. What is true of individuals is still more true of a whole society. Our modern society, in so far as it has lost its religion, has despaired: and despair is even now destroying it. But the mood which it has rejected as an illusion, and which is the fruit of dogma—the dogmas of divine personality, of immortality, of an eternal justice—is a mood of life. So had it saved all that could be saved of the old Mediterranean culture when the high pagan culture perished; it was the baptising of the dying empire which preserved its essentials. So now, as the Middle Ages failed, that same religion was strong to replace, to nurture a growth far exceeding what had decayed. For the Catholic temper is a mood creative. It breeds, and, here again, was bringing forth a foison of new things.

Let not the error be imagined or entertained that those new things would necessarily have led to the disruption of Christendom, though they inevitably led to the disruption of its mediæval shell. The interest which the xvth century showed in the writings, building, and art of Greek and Roman antiquity, in discovery, in added instruments of human action, in a new aspect of reality, the "growing of the light over it," need never have shipwrecked Europe. Such an advance might well have, and could have, and should have, led to a modern time still united and still wholly Christian. The final disaster of the Reformation was due in nothing to necessity, but, I say again, to the perverted wills and cumulative sins of men. None the less is it important to note that in all this story of the dying of the Middle Ages we are watching not only something dying, but something being

[1] Dean Inge.

born and becoming young and vigorous. It is the thing later to be the Renaissance ; in its turn ruined by the wild religious anarchy of the XVIth century.

. . . . . .

Now I have said that of all the provinces of Europe, England, with which we are here concerned, was most affected by the distinction between the earlier and the later Middle Ages. It is more necessary in reading the history of England to remember that distinction than it is in reading the history of any other province. There were many reasons which made the later Middle Ages so different in England from the earlier, but the three main reasons are the effect of the Black Death upon the language of the country.

1. After 300 years of a society in which French had been the dominant idiom, spoken not only by all that governed, but by all that directed and was educated in the community, there came with the later Middle Ages 200 years in which a language mainly based upon the old popular dialects, but still something new, a language which alone can properly be called English—the language which we speak to-day—grew to be universal throughout the country. It gained all the middle classes, the smaller squires ; it became familiar to the greater nobles, and even to the court. It ended, a little[1] before the Middle Ages were over, by being the tongue of the whole people, from king to beggar, and so it has since remained.

Discussion as to whether this new fixed conversation among all men in England is to be called a new language : whether we may say that what we to-day call *English*—the language we all use and know—first appears mature and recognisable among the men who lived through the last half

[1] Roughly, 1370 to 1380 is the decade in which this new amalgamated English tongue begins to become the general tongue of gentlemen. But French is still the main idiom of the highest classes till far later, and of the Court till, say, 1460; while it remains a secondary language at Court for generations.

of the XIVth century ; whether before their time there had been no true " English " language in our present use of that expression, may, like every other debate, be turned into a barren discussion of terms.

Certainly a mixed language (a little " Celtic," much more Latin, many terms peculiar to this island and of unknown origin—" boy," " girl," " plough "—but in most of its simplest words and in all its characteristic sounds what is called " Teutonic "),[1] spoken in several dialects, had been known from the early part of the Dark Ages as the tongue of the Angles ; and this little group of people had come, without a doubt, as mercenaries or pirates (more probably both) from the Bight of Heligoland.[2]

Certainly the various dialects which, under the influence of the Catholic Church, gradually advanced from the Pagan East Coast across the island, right up to the Exe in Devonshire and to the Welsh hills, came to be called by the Xth century, or even perhaps the IXth, collectively " English." Certainly the fixed—what one might almost call the classical form—of one special dialect, that of the Court of Winchester (vaguely termed Anglo-Saxon), was the accepted, official, written and spoken language of the governing class of England up to the XIth century. The continuity of mere name is obvious ; just as there is a continuity of mere name between

[1] It will be remembered that " Teutonic " does not mean some imaginary aboriginal German tongue, but what was in common to many barbarians already, before their speech affected England, profoundly affected by the Latin and Greek of the civilisation with which they mingled. Thus " Shield," " Road," " Book," " Ship," " Silver," are Teutonic words—but all from the Roman empire and its Greek and Latin as Wiener has proved.

[2] May we derive " Engle," " Angle " from Angulus ? It is what one would expect. A powerful universal civilisation has its sailors upon every sea. They give a name to a peculiarly shaped stretch of sea coast upon its boundaries : a place where the shore, as the mariner follows it, turns sharp round by 90 degrees : the sailors call it " The Corner," " Angulus." That name naturally connects itself with the scattered and few barbarians living there, and deeply influenced, like their neighbours the Saxons, by the Roman culture which permeated them with its trade, in whose armies they served, of which they were the fringe, and from which they obtained nearly all the rude arts they knew.

the Lombard compatriots of Pope Pius XI and the Lombards of Gregory the Great, or the Roumania of the Great War and the Romans of the Dacian campaign, or Brittany and Britain. But if we consider not names but real things, we shall decide that this glorious instrument which we are fortunate enough to inherit, the English tongue, is a XIVth century thing. "Early English," "Middle English," and the rest of the recent academic jargon are terms unhistorical and propagandist: set to a brief. The plain historical truth, free from modern religious and national bias, is that, from some little time after the Black Death, and as a consequence of it, there has been used and written by educated Englishmen the language we to-day call English; that before the Black Death educated Englishmen spoke French; that before Edward the Confessor's reign educated Englishmen spoke Anglo-Saxon which, most emphatically is *not* English.

You can pick out one short sentence after another from an Anglo-Saxon document and transliterate it so that it is identical with a modern English sentence. But it remains true that any considerable passage of Anglo-Saxon, in its original forms of the Dark Ages, or in the gradually changing dialects of the early Middle Ages, is to the modern Englishman a foreign tongue.[1] While all that comes after the Black Death, if it be put into modern spelling, save for an archaic word here and there, is to the modern Englishman fully comprehensible, and, indeed, recognised at once as his own familiar speech. Not only has it in the main his own vocabulary; it has (which is much more important) his own spirit; his own order of thought.

All things are continuous. All life comes from a micro-

[1] Here are a couple of dictionary samples. We say, "At times it seems pleasant." The Anglo-Saxon would be, "Dhe heo myrige heviltidum gethuht sy." We say, "He cured many of their wounds." The Anglo-Saxon would be, "Lacande monigo of teissum." We say, "The sky splendid with stars." The Anglo-Saxon would be, "Upheofon torhtne mid his tunglung." And so on!

scopic egg, and there is no definable living thing, from a nation to a weed, which is not embryonic before it is mature. That is true, obviously, of language. But it is equally true that only the final thing matured is capable of definition, and English—meaning by that word the instrument which we use with such joy and power to-day—is an utterly different thing from the talk of the Dark Ages, and essentially the same thing with the talk of Chaucer.

Again, throughout nature, two things unite to form a third ; a man may prefer to trace his lineage up the one line or the other, but he is himself : he is not his ancestry. In the same way, neither in soul or body is the English language French or Anglo-Saxon. It is itself. The English language was produced by welding and fusion, under shock, of two things : the upper class French of the XIVth century, and those native dialects which French had already profoundly influenced (affecting their order, reducing the complexity of their word-endings, introducing French words here and there) but which were still mainly Germanic in the popular mouth.

The French tongue, which had been the universal medium of all directing thought and government, had spread over a wider and wider social area in England for 300 years, from at least the accession of Edward the Confessor to the beginning of Edward III's reign. This language it was which had formed the *mind* of early mediæval England. Its simplicity, its logic, very much of its vocabulary, governs our language still.

The various Saxon (and Angle) dialects of the Dark Ages sank down during the Middle Ages into the populace. They differed from district to district ; and they were more and more modified by the use of French all around (by the superiors of the labourers, small farmers, and the rest), but they still remained different as late as, say, 1300, from what was the general speech of 1400.

I have already pointed out the best familiar parallel by

which we moderns can understand this state of affairs, at the end of what may be called the "French period," of English talk just before the Black Death. It is the condition of Wales—and especially of North Wales from about a lifetime ago. There you had two things—modern English and Welsh. The gentry talked English; so did the administrative classes, the clergy, the heads of the police, and so on. A few of them knew Welsh and were proud to know it, but none of them thought in Welsh. Most of them had a Welsh accent, except those of the wealthiest class (just as in Edward III's earlier years the English gentlemen speaking French as their only tongue, yet spoke it with an accent which the northern Frenchman laughed at). The labourer, the small farmer, the fisherman, talked Welsh, and most of them knew no English. But a considerable minority had a smattering of English, and nearly all of them had a few words of English without which they could hardly have carried on. In between was the group of classes, neither of the lowest nor of the highest in wealth and opportunity, who were Welsh-thinking for the most part, but bilingual in expression.

The parallel is not exact—no historical parallel is exact. The Welsh had behind them a high culture and a fine printed popular literature. They had the Welsh Bible and the Welsh hymns, and an immense tradition of 2000 years. The Anglo-Saxon dialects of early mediæval England had nothing of the sort. Welsh challenged English as a classical language. The educated Anglo-Saxon court language had disappeared centuries before 1300, and nothing resembling it remained but the dialects of labourers and the lower middle class, divided into any number of local forms.

Nevertheless, for a modern man to understand the English of Edward I and Edward II, and even the earlier years of Edward III, the best picture he can call to mind is still North Wales. Just as to-day an Englishman goes to Carnarvon or Bangor, talks English in the towns without any doubt of being misunderstood, and is at once answered

by those whom he addresses, so Simon de Montfort, or Gaveston, a long lifetime after him, would travel in England talking French without any doubt of being understood wherever he went, and of being answered at once in his own tongue. Now and then he might come across some oaf who grinned and could not answer, but it would be an exception, unless he chanced upon an isolated place. The castle in which Edward II was murdered, for instance, was full of serving men who drank ale on their benches and talked some dialect of their own, Anglo-Saxon in texture. But their superiors, who ordered them about, spoke to them in French, and they knew enough French to understand.

By 1370, say—or a little later—the small lord of the village was talking English. The educated men when they did not write in Latin were, some of them, beginning to write (to each other) in English.

At Crécy in 1346 you would have heard the king, his officers, many of their dependants, speaking French, and most of them French only. The archers were speaking their native local dialects, and Welsh and Cornish: there would have been a considerable class corresponding to our non-commissioned officers, through whom contact of command was kept up, who were bilingual. But at Agincourt in 1415 all could, and very nearly all did, speak what to-day we call "English." Had we been present we should have been understood.

What would have happened but for the Black Death it is not easy to surmise. Perhaps the country would have remained bilingual to this day—as Brabant has. In the Brussels of the XIIIth century one heard official and governing French all about one, but a populace which, in its private life, talked a kind of Dutch. You have the same thing in Brussels to-day. Perhaps the standard French of the vocal classes in England and the various popular dialects would have amalgamated—already French was having its strong effect before the Black Death on what lay below. In that

case we should have now been speaking a language not unlike modern English, but with far more French words in it. It is even conceivable, as a third hypothesis, that the upper-class French would have gradually ousted all other forms, especially if an Anglo-French nation had come into existence.

What *did* happen was the somewhat sudden permeation, after the pestilence, of the Upper speech by the Lower, and their amalgam in the form we use to-day and call the English language.

I repeat: Under the tremendous blow of the Black Death these two disparate elements fused and produced a third thing, which is English. There was such dislocation of social life that the special training of the wealthier children was not maintained; that posts clerical and other—normally kept for a certain social standing—were filled rapidly, of necessity, almost at random. The effect was fully felt in about twenty years—or a little more—and by the days of Richard II the transformation was accomplished.

The French tongue continued thenceforward as a special, cosmopolitan, no longer national, thing. Henry IV thought in French, no doubt, and usually wrote in it, but he could talk English. Henry V probably thought in French, but he was presumably bilingual, even in his mind. Henry VI, again, would be French from the nursery, but talked English with those about him after he was grown up; and, below the court, French was a foreign tongue to the generation which fought the Wars of the Roses. Take any muniment room in England, and you will see that the native, natural expression of the directing Englishman, in which also he addresses his inferiors (and they understand him), was French before the Black Death—but in half a lifetime, or less, after the Black Death, English.[1]

[1] Perhaps the most illuminating piece of chance evidence on the great change is this: that men noticed *as an innovation* that schoolboys in the generation after the Black Death were beginning to be made to construe their Latin into ***English***, not French, for the first time.

2. Mainly as an effect of this revolution in language, you have a national feeling growing and strengthening in England during the later Middle Ages, as, indeed, it was growing and strengthening elsewhere, particularly in France. But here it grew more rapidly and strongly than elsewhere. This national feeling shows itself in a hundred ways: to some extent in architecture, more in institutions; it is fostered by the brilliant wars of Edward III in France; it is exasperated by their failure at the end of the XIVth century; it is vastly enhanced by the new triumphs abroad of Henry V; it becomes permanent, and remains a factor latent throughout all the later Middle Ages, and at last was used with determining effect by those who profited from the loot of religion after the Reformation.

3. Lastly, you have in England more than elsewhere, and in opposition to what was going on in France, a grave loss in the old sanctity of kingship; for the later Middle Ages are in England the story of the Lancastrian usurpation, of the murder of the legitimate king by his cousin, of the popular indignation thereat, of the consequent legitimist (Yorkist) counter-claim to the throne, and of the welter which we call the Wars of the Roses. The Lancastrian usurpation, though it deals with a dynasty, that is, with a small number of important men out of millions, is not a mere court story. It is a story profoundly affecting the whole state of England, and must be properly emphasised as the third of the great marks which distinguish England of the later Middle Ages from England of the earlier.

Such is the general aspect of the disturbed 200 years which we are about to enter. I have emphasised, I think not unduly, the importance of the Black Death as perhaps the main cause—certainly one of the main causes—of the change, and a cause of greater effect in England than anywhere else in Christendom: to a more particular description of that decisive blow I will next turn.

I

The Black Death

I

THE BLACK DEATH

THE fearful catastrophe of 1348-52 was not known to its own generation, nor (perhaps) for some centuries, by its modern name of "the Black Death." That only seems to have become a common term long after to distinguish it from later visitations, as from the Great Plague of London in the XVIIth century.

It seems to have approached us thus :—

We find it first, probably, in China, some years before, in the early '40's of the XIVth century—perhaps in 1344 or 1343. It appears to have been at once recognised as differing in important features from any other recorded trouble of the kind : especially in its rapid effect—killing within three days. It was probably bubonic, and spread by the agency of insects—but all that is mere surmise. We must always beware in history of the influence of modern physical science with its tendency to see in everything immutable simple and permanent laws of similar cause and effect in all ages. The truth would seem to be that the great diseases of our race vary most perplexingly from age to age : they vary not only in degree but in kind. A new one may arise to-morrow ; one most familiar to us may disappear or become insignificant. We boast we are immune from such mortality to-day. It is but boasting.

The Black Death, then, is first *certainly* found in the Crimea, where the town of Genoa had a flourishing colony, Caffa (near Sebastopol). This town was besieged in 1346 by a vast Tartar horde. The besiegers were suddenly stricken

with the plague, and died in heaps. Next it attacked the besieged. Ships bringing refugees from Caffa conveyed the infection to the Mediterranean. They touched at, and communicated it to, Constantinople, to Sicily (in the autumn of 1347—the first land in the West to suffer), and finally brought it almost simultaneously to Venice and Genoa by January, 1348—and what followed was appalling: something the like of which in degree had never been known before in our race.

Here, as we approach the statistical consideration of the Black Death, it is important to appreciate the nature of this evidence. In doing this, our first duty is to neglect and abandon the silly modern academic habit of despising general contemporary judgment. Because in the old Chroniclers such judgment is not usually detailed (though it sometimes is so), and because it is of a rough outline sort, we are asked to reject it as worthless: "mediæval," "uncritical"—words used to conceal contempt for a civilisation of Catholic culture.

Contemporary general judgments are always the best guide to the main immediate effect of any event, and we do right to follow them. On the other hand, we must criticise them, not, as pedants do, by regarding as final an appeal to fiscal documents (which were never drawn up with the object of giving vital statistics), but from the nature of the case.

For instance, we know that the plague spared children rather than adults. When, therefore, we are told that in such and such a town such and such a proportion perished, we may safely consider that the phrase is applied rather to the adults and to the outward civic life of the place than to the *whole* population, including infants.

But, on the other hand, when we have particular numbers given we ought to accept them, and we may be certain that the general impression produced upon the survivors at the time is a good basis for our own conclusions so many centuries after.

The plague first fell, then, upon Sicily. Next upon Venice and Genoa.

It fell upon these great Italian maritime cities with an awful fury. We have it on the most excellent contemporary evidence that the *majority* of both those noble republics were carried away—and at once. The highest estimates given are perhaps exaggerated—six-sevenths of the whole population of Genoa ; seven-tenths of Venice—but without doubt more than half the people perished in each port. By April it had come down into Northern Tuscany, and by May to Orvieto : Petrarch, in Parma, heard in that same month of his Laura's death in Avignon, and wrote the pregnant sentence, " Posterity will call the story a fable " : so overwhelming was the wave. His own brother was *sole* survivor out of a monastery of thirty-five.

The pestilence struck Marseilles contemporaneously with Venice and Genoa, that is, in January, 1348. The Bishop and *all* his chapter died. Ships drifted about the sea bearing crews all dead. Narbonne was depopulated ; and as its old port, already slowly dying out, needed energy and numbers to keep it dredged, that ancient maritime capital has never recovered, and stands to-day, with its half-finished cathedral, like a fossil. Nor is the cathedral of Narbonne the only witness in stone to that abrupt chasm in the life of the Middle Ages. Siena stands there to this day, a mere beginning, with fragments of what was to have been by far the greatest church in Christendom scattered about the town. Beauvais is but transepts and a choir. Here in England the Parish Church of Great Yarmouth bears the same witness. I give but three examples at random out of hundreds.

In the papal territory of Avignon 150,000 died. It reached Paris in the early summer, Normandy before the end of July, 1348. As that summer passed it diminished in the South, and was there faded away before winter, when here in the North it was in full course.

The summer of 1348 was well advanced and England was

still free. As late as the middle of August the Bishop of Wells was ordering Friday prayers that it might not cross over from France—but already Death had invaded.

It was on the 7th of July, 1348, that the pestilence landed in this island: at Weymouth.

The port (then higher up stream and across the river at Melcombe Regis) was then a large one. It had furnished nearly as many ships as Bristol for the siege of Calais.

All that harvest of 1348 was very wet, and the bad weather went on right to the beginning of winter, and even the eve of Christmas. That may account for the astonishing severity of the scourge in this country, for it would seem as though England suffered far more than any other large district: more than any save the exceptionally (and early) stricken ports of the Mediterranean, in spite of our northern air. A wet harvest is the peculiar recurrent calamity of an Atlantic climate. It has its effect to-day: in the Middle Ages it was a disaster. It meant less food and a hampering of all social activities. Coupled with the lack of sunlight and with the soddenness of the ground, partial famine may account for the exceptional violence of the disease in England. But that factor may be exaggerated. For when the scourge reached Ireland that country was in a moment of prosperity—yet the mortality was fearful. And here, in England, it ran its worst through 1349 and on into 1350 and later. It was like a fire which dies down and then spurts up here and there in belated flames. As late as 1352 it was perhaps at its worst in Oxford: and, with the mention of that place, we can give chapter and verse for one violent and strikingly local effect of the blow that struck the English Middle Ages asunder. Fitz Ralph, the Archbishop of Armagh, was Chancellor before the visitation. He was familiar with the rolls. He testifies to a scholar-population of 30,000: eight years after, in 1357, the same witness tells us there were *not a third* of that number; before the end of the century they had sunk to less than 6000.

These figures not only illustrate the plague ; they illustrate also the density of mediæval population—30,000 males above the age of childhood in one occupation in this one town alone. Indeed, here, as in so many other cases, the modern attempt to belittle the numerical strength of mediæval England breaks down. An Oxford of 30,000 scholars was an Oxford of at least 50,000 all told—and there is no reason to doubt such figures. To say that careful registers were not kept, and that contemporary witnesses could not keep a roll, is to show ignorance of the time. Never were the details of life—especially in expenditure—more carefully recorded.

I have not space for much detail, even upon this capital affair, in such limits as this book imposes on me. Let me quote but a few typical figures.

Norwich had a very large population. Apart from its suburbs, it counted sixty parishes—certainly 60,000 souls : perhaps 100,000, probably more. Record of the mortality was kept, was seen, and was quoted before the document was lost. The total number killed here by the Black Death was 57,374. Some twenty years later more than twenty parishes had disappeared, ten wholly, fourteen so much as to render parish work useless.

Yarmouth, far smaller (the spit of sand on which it rose was still growing), lost some 7000.

London was struck as late as Michaelmas, 1348. The episcopal registers are lost, so we have no such exact record as we have elsewhere of the clerical mortality. Nor have we any exact general record. But there are interesting fragments of evidence which, pieced together, give us some view of the enormous mortality in the capital. London was by far the largest city in the kingdom—and densely packed. Within the walls it had more than twice the parishes of Norwich. Now we have definite record, cited much later, *but cited from contemporary inscription*, that in one principal cemetery made specially for the occasion some 50,000 were buried—and there were many others. We find that even

in the wealthier classes of London the mortality multiplied by more than ten, for the wills proved in the Court of Hustings during the plague year are 222, to an average of 22 only in the three preceding years. We know, also, from this record, the climax. It was in April and May, 1349. Here let it be remarked that this multiple of ten is strikingly confirmed in a very great number of separate instances. Where one person died in a normal year, ten died in the year of pestilence. Now nothing is more conclusive as evidence to a fact in history than such convergence of independent statements, general and particular, official and popular. Thus in diocese after diocese you find the multiple of ten reached, approached, or exceeded in the registers of new incumbents. Like the episcopal registers of London those of Sussex (Chichester) are unfortunately lost, but wherever record remains—or almost—the evidence is the same, as we shall see in a moment when reference is made to Exeter (Devon and Cornwall), Winchester, Hereford, etc.

But this multiple of ten coincides curiously closely with the general popular estimate of losses among the adult population. We must, of course, eliminate merely rhetorical or foolish, loose expressions such as "nearly all the human race perished;" or that in the *Eulogium:* "Hardly a home or hamlet in which all or most did not die." Even these are good evidence to the effect produced by the business, and we can easily understand how they came to be written when we consider that in case after case of which we have detailed evidence, *all* a religious community, or *all* but one, or *all* but two, *all* a chapter, *all* the tenants of a manor, or part of a manor, are taken. Still, such phrases, I repeat, are not statistical evidence—but registers are. And when we find *ten* times the normal death-rate appearing in men of clerical age, it must mean the loss of from very much over a third to nearly, or quite, half the population. Our modern death-rate is no guide, applying as it does to the highly artificial conditions of an urban population, where an omnipresent

machine of organised medical aid, controlled water supply, and enforced, innumerable regulations, all tend not only to lower the death-rate of the normal and healthy, but, far more, to preserve for an added span lives doomed or imperfect.

To turn to other examples : Bristol suffered quite exceptionally. It suffered on the scale of Genoa and the ports of the Mediterranean, where, in its first attack, the pestilence wiped out cities wholesale. Contemporaries call the deaths in Bristol " almost the whole strength of the town," that is, the adult life of the place came to a standstill. There is no reason to disbelieve them.

Bodmin is not, and never was, of any great size. In the Middle Ages it was but a small market town. Yet in Bodmin no less than 1500 people died, and in one house—that of the Augustinian Friars—*all* died but two. In the Cistercian house of Newenham, out of twenty-six religious, twenty-three die. Of the brethren and sisters in the hostel of Westminster, all die but three. Of the great Benedictine monastery attached to the Abbey, the prior dies, and probably more than half the community, for before the plague was over thirty-seven are noted as buried.

There is record of whole villages perishing ; or, at least, all users of the village monopolies, such as the mill. For example, in the Manor of Cookham in Berkshire, all the service-tenants of the manor are killed in the plague time.

A mass of evidence has accumulated through English and French research since the original and decisive essay published more than thirty years ago by Cardinal Gasquet (upon whose work I have principally relied, for it is far the best general survey).

Some scholars have manipulated this evidence in an attempt to prove that contemporaries were wrong ; did not see what was before their eyes. I have already expressed my suspicion of their motives and methods. It is the academic fashion of our day to deny the catastrophic in biology

and geology. The prejudice extends to history. But though minute research from the manor rolls tends, indeed, to show that the distribution of mortality was uneven (in Hampshire, for instance, one can map out belts of differing losses in service-tenants as established by Heriot payments, and those belts show varying intensity in the severity of the plague), the worst parts amply balance the best. Moreover, a host of chance details confirm the contemporary judgment of the Black Death's enormity. We have public officials renewed once, twice, and even thrice by cause of death in the same year—as, for instance, two Archbishops of Canterbury, three Mayors of Oxford. Consider, among cases of whole parishes being apparently wiped out, such an one as that of Hartlebury in Worcestershire. It loses by death *all* the tenants who can fulfil their feudal work upon the land. Perhaps some of the children survived, perhaps the tenures mentioned do not cover the whole ground; indeed, this is probable. But the roll is one of seventy-six tenures, and though in many of these lists calculation by manor rolls is insufficient, yet such a number of heads of families in such a small place must account for the majority; and if *all* the service-tenants died, it is a guide to the mortality of the rest; the entry is simple and clear. No service could be performed, and the revenue failed entirely. Again, the Royal Manorial Land at Carlisle is waste five years later because there is *no one* to work it.

The clerical records are, of course, more complete, and they are most illuminating. There may be cited, for instance, the case of Norfolk. The clerical mortality there was *more* than ten times that of normal years, and in a certain small number of parishes, as many as three incumbents are named and died one after the other. The proportion is much the same everywhere. In the West Riding about half the clergy die; in Nottinghamshire somewhat more than half; in Derbyshire, nearly half. To an average of seven new incumbents a year in that county, you leap in

the plague year to sixty-three—a multiple not of ten, indeed, but of nine. But in the diocese of Hereford the average of 13 new incumbents leaps to a total of 175—a multiple of 13½! —and even so, there seem to have been over forty parishes left vacant. The multiple for Hampshire, again, is ten ; and though Bath and Wells gives the lower multiple of seven, one may, counting the dioceses that are over 10 per cent., average that figure, as I have said, fairly well over all England. Of the beneficed clergy ten times more died in the plague year than in a normal year.

It is unfortunate that the episcopal registers of London, which would have given us such valuable evidence upon the time, have disappeared ; but we have London items which are illuminating. We find notes of ecclesiastical property in that diocese affected by the plague ; a manor in which, out of eleven of one class of tenant, eight have died ; *and there is no one to replace them :* presumably they have no heirs. Again, in another little sidelight, wood that has been cut presumably before the plague and cannot be sold ; in another the receipts of the manor court are halved.

In the County of Buckingham nearly half the beneficed clergy die. In the Diocese of Exeter their deaths in seven months alone are ten times the normal number of a whole year. The yearly average of new presentations before the plague is thirty. From January to July, 1349, we find 306.

If we turn to monastic houses, the record, where it has survived, is even more startling ; a thing perhaps natural to numbers living in community, though the religious houses, with their ample space, good water, and cleanliness are also favoured. For instance, in one monastery in Wiltshire, Ivy Cross, you have an experience to which, as we have seen, the continent bears witness, all the community save one is swept away. Half of St. Swithin's in Winchester ; nearly half the great foundation of Hyde, in the same town. The same story at St. Albans ; the same in Glastonbury. Not one, perhaps, of these great establishments ever again

reached the old numbers; most of them are found at the dissolution declined to half, or less than half, what they were in the XIIIth century and in the early XIVth.

Another very striking instance of the mortality is the large number of cases in which tenants of a manor are recorded as having left no heir; and you even find not a few instances of this among the wealthier classes, where the seeking out and finding of a distant heir would be a more common matter.

The marvel is not that life should have changed, but that the social structure survived at all. We owe it to the strength and continuity of mediæval institutions, to their exactitude in working, and the original simplicity of their organisation, as also to the willing acceptation of them by the society they supported, that our civilisation did not perish and that life "carried on" intact across the chasm. But re-arrangement throughout the whole body of the nation could not be avoided: great landslips after such an earthquake. No rigidity of discipline and tradition could avoid such. Society was saved. But it was never again what it had been at the summit of our culture in the preceding century of St. Louis, St. Dominic, St. Thomas, Edward of England, Innocent IV. From the Black Death all Christendom and England, in particular, are transformed.

The effect was not sudden. It is never so even after the most violent shock. We do not yet know what posterity will remark of the Great War, nor what fruits that calamity is to bear. Ten years have passed, and as yet the world in which we live is still apparently upon the model, and externally much the same, as that of the last day of peace in 1913. Menace, but not yet the fulfilment of menace, is abroad. The generation which was already mature when the storm broke was formed and is not to be unformed. The young who cannot remember the older conditions are not yet—or now but barely—taking their place in life and moulding the

time. It is *their* maturity at the earliest which will mark the change.

So it was with the Black Death. Not the men of the king's age—men approaching their fortieth year—were essentially affected by its results, nor even the lads who, like the Black Prince, had fought at Crécy. But those who were born from 1340 onwards, or thereabouts—men of Wycliffe's generation, the younger contemporaries of John of Gaunt—these were the men who showed in their new disturbances and ills the magnitude of what had passed in their childhood or before their birth. They were the inheritors of a changed world.

II

The Lancastrian Usurpation

(From the Black Death, 1349, to the Fall of Cherbourg, 1450—101 Years)

THE THEATRE OF THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR

II

THE LANCASTRIAN USURPATION

(A) The Preliminaries : the Last Years of Edward III (July 7th, 1348, to June 21st, 1377—29 Years)

THE hundred years which open the decline of the Middle Ages—from the mid-xivth to the mid-xvth centuries (1350-1450) may best be called, in England, "the Lancastrian Usurpation," for that is the great political event which gives the time all its character : no mere dynastic quarrel, but one profoundly affecting the English people as a whole and determining their future.

Nature of the Lancastrian Usurpation

It begins with rather more than a decade—1349-1362—which is filled with the last efforts of Edward III in France, their failure, and the appearance of John of Gaunt, third son of Edward,[1] as the chief figure in English life : on his emergence into prominence he is in his first vigour, 22 years of age, the representative by his marriage with its heiress of the royal house of Lancaster, and bearing the title of its duchy : far the richest and most powerful man in the country, and becoming all important as his elder brother, Edward the Black Prince, sickens and dies.

On his nephew, Richard II's, accession (as a child) the Lancastrian influence is dreaded but kept in the background biding its time. After John of Gaunt's death his son, Henry, strikes at the right moment (1399), and by force snatches the crown from his cousin Richard the legitimate king.

[1] For title of Lancaster, see table on p. 49.

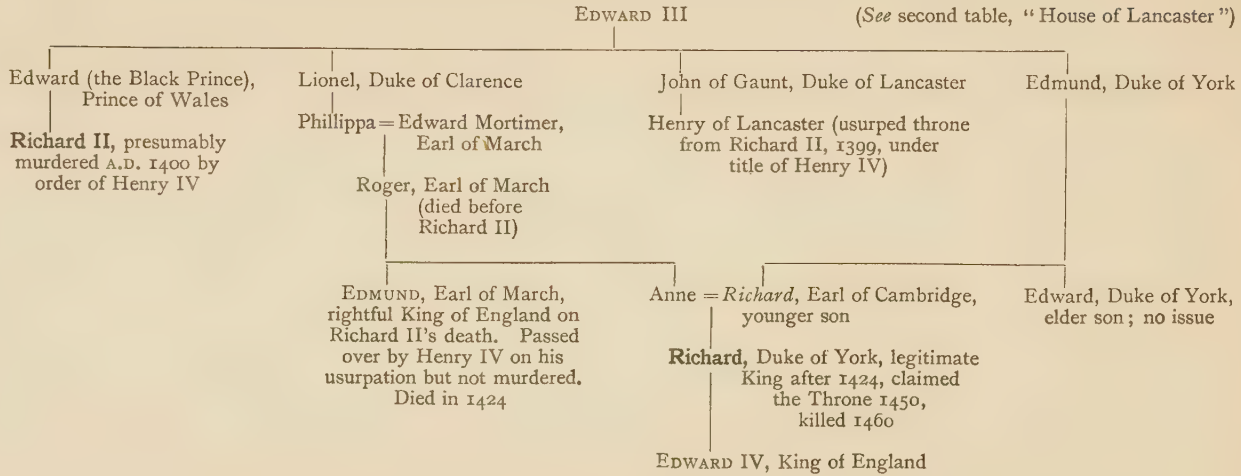
This usurper is crowned as Henry IV. His son, again, Henry V, has great military success in France, leaves a child, Henry VI, who is crowned King of France and England; but the position is lost, the English garrisons are driven out till the last of them in Normandy (Cherbourg) surrenders in 1450, and the disasters of the new usurping dynasty give his chance to the legitimate heir Richard, Duke of York: with this began the Wars of the Roses and the full Lancastrian usurpation was at an end.

It shook the tradition of legitimate monarchy in England, weakened the State both by attempting more than it could achieve abroad, and by being compelled, from its insecurity of title, to yield to, and compromise with, the wealthy who, as squires and merchants in the House of Commons, become far too powerful. It depressed the smaller folk. It lost its control over, and left uncorrected, the hierarchy of the Church, thereby making possible later the Reformation. It is, in general, the symptom and the companion of the mediæval end in England.

Politically, the end of Edward III's reign, after the Black Death, is the breakdown of a programme, of an intention, and of a national mood. And all this is connected with the breakdown of a personality—that of the King. The programme was the ancient traditional programme of restoring the inherited power of the Plantagenet crown overseas. The intention was an intention directing the strength of the State towards that end. The national mood was one of glory in military achievement and of confidence in its final results—and all these failed England in the end of Edward III's reign, the England lessened by plague. The power overseas was ruined, the intention of preserving it was abandoned, the national mood, begun in high hope and content, ended in suspicion and a sense of failure; for Edward III, who was the soul of all this affair, sank in mental power and became at first disturbed, and later paralysed, in will.

TABLE SHOWING LEGITIMATE DESCENT BY PRIMOGENITURE OF THE ENGLISH CROWN FROM EDWARD III

Excluding all who die without issue living long enough to transmit or inherit


EDWARD III
(See second table, "House of Lancaster")
Edward (the Black Prince), Prince of Wales
Richard II, presumably murdered A.D. 1400 by order of Henry IV
Lionel, Duke of Clarence
Phillippa = Edward Mortimer, Earl of March
Roger, Earl of March (died before Richard II)
EDMUND, Earl of March, rightful King of England on Richard II's death. Passed over by Henry IV on his usurpation but not murdered. Died in 1424
John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster
Henry of Lancaster (usurped throne from Richard II, 1399, under title of Henry IV)
Anne = Richard, Earl of Cambridge, younger son
Richard, Duke of York, legitimate King after 1424, claimed the Throne 1450, killed 1460
EDWARD IV, King of England
Edmund, Duke of York
Edward, Duke of York, elder son; no issue

We miss the point of the period if we take Poitiers as a sort of pendant to Crécy, and we lose the whole character in a fog of conflicting details if we try to follow the innumerable army actions and counter-actions which fill nearly twenty years of gradual surrender to the French monarchy. Poitiers was a victory just as Crécy had been, and had even greater apparent fruit ; but that fruit never matured ; for the King was failing, and his heir, the most famous soldier of the time, the Black Prince, was not destined to carry on the fame or the effort of his father.

Therefore may all that time be called the " Preliminaries " of the Lancastrian Usurpation, which was slowly increasing its threat as the years went on.

The first years after the Black Death were a truce, so far as foreign war was concerned.

Within the realm they were marked by that violent fluctuation in prices which always accompanies a great numerical disturbance, whether a universal war or a universal plague. We shall deal, in connection with the Peasant's revolt, thirty years later, with the economic effects of the Black Death as a whole. It is enough to note here that they begin to appear immediately after the pestilence in the form of an effort to regulate wages during the abnormal scarcity of labourers.

The social troubles beginning with the Black Death.

These years also saw the small beginnings of what was later to be a serious spiritual disturbance. A sect of half-mad penitents appeared, wandering round Europe and even reaching England. From their public, self-inflicted scourgings they were called Flagellants. This the earliest heretical enthusiasm bred by the chaos succeeding the plague—had little popular effect, and was foreign in origin ; but it was a symptom.

At the same moment is clearly apparent a strong *new* ferment of jealousy between the mass of Englishmen and their lords. The moral basis of feudalism had been weakening long before the plague : the moral tie between lord and

dependant—down to the last link between the manorial lord and his former serfs—had been long growing fainter. It received through the Black Death a wound which never closed. The spiritual force upon which feudalism had ultimately reposed was not to be the same again, especially here in England. There arose once more—and within thirty years it had become powerful—the original, ever-recurrent challenge to the ancient connection between great wealth and high status: the denial of the right of powerful men to be rich or rich men powerful. The growth of a common language had something to do with this passing appetite for equality, but more the strain of a great disaster. For under such strain the mass of poor men feel their common quality with the rich. There is a sort of implied bargain at the back of poor men's minds that they are to be preserved from disaster by the wealthier classes, as the least that the privileged of this world can do for the unprivileged. And when disaster comes, whether in the shape of a great war (such as that through which we have just passed) or of an overwhelming pestilence, such as the Black Death, respect for wealth is shaken. But the enthusiasm for equality does not last.

Renewal of the war with France, A.D. 1355.

The fighting in France did not begin again until five years had passed from the decline of the worst of the plague. The technical occasion of the renewal of war was a bargain between the two crowns which failed through the strength of public opinion: a bargain whereby Edward renounced his claim to the Crown of France on condition that he should be recognised by the French King as full sovereign of the southern provinces on the Garonne, of which he and his ancestors had retained feudal hold, when, and after all else had been lost, under John.

It is due to the trouble at home.

But it is a better explanation of the new campaign of 1355 to regard it as following upon the social difficulties at home. War was still popular, it was still taken for granted in England that the great national soldier and king would

triumph again as he had done in the past, nor was that expectation disappointed. And Edward and his son by the early success of the new war, delayed those worst social effects of the pestilence in England which had thoroughly weakened the French provinces. The fact that the French population was thus shaken by the plague is another factor in the situation which must not be forgotten. The bonds had been loosened, especially the bond between lord and tenant, and that was an advantage to the invader.

Double plan of attack.

The plan was for a double attack from north and from south. The king was to march from Calais up the Paris road. The Black Prince, who was now in full vigour of young manhood in his twenty-fifth year, and already famous throughout the West, was to march eastward and northwards from Bordeaux.

The first part of the plan broke down. John, now King of France, since his father Philippe's death in 1350, avoided the engagement, and wasted the country before Edward's march. The King of England did not even reach Amiens; he was back in Calais within ten days. But the southern expedition under the Black Prince bore more fruit. Its object was to cut off southern revenue from the French king, and the devastation was horrible. It was a great plundering raid begun in the first days of October, 1355, and carried all over the Langue d'Oc, burning village and town, failing before the strongholds of the cities, but destroying the private houses and looting everywhere. It went right across to the Mediterranean, and, simultaneously, the Black Prince's father, having failed in the north, returned to England to meet a Scotch invasion, and similarly harried all the eastern coast of Scotland up to the Forth.

The Black Prince's raid through Southern France, 1355.

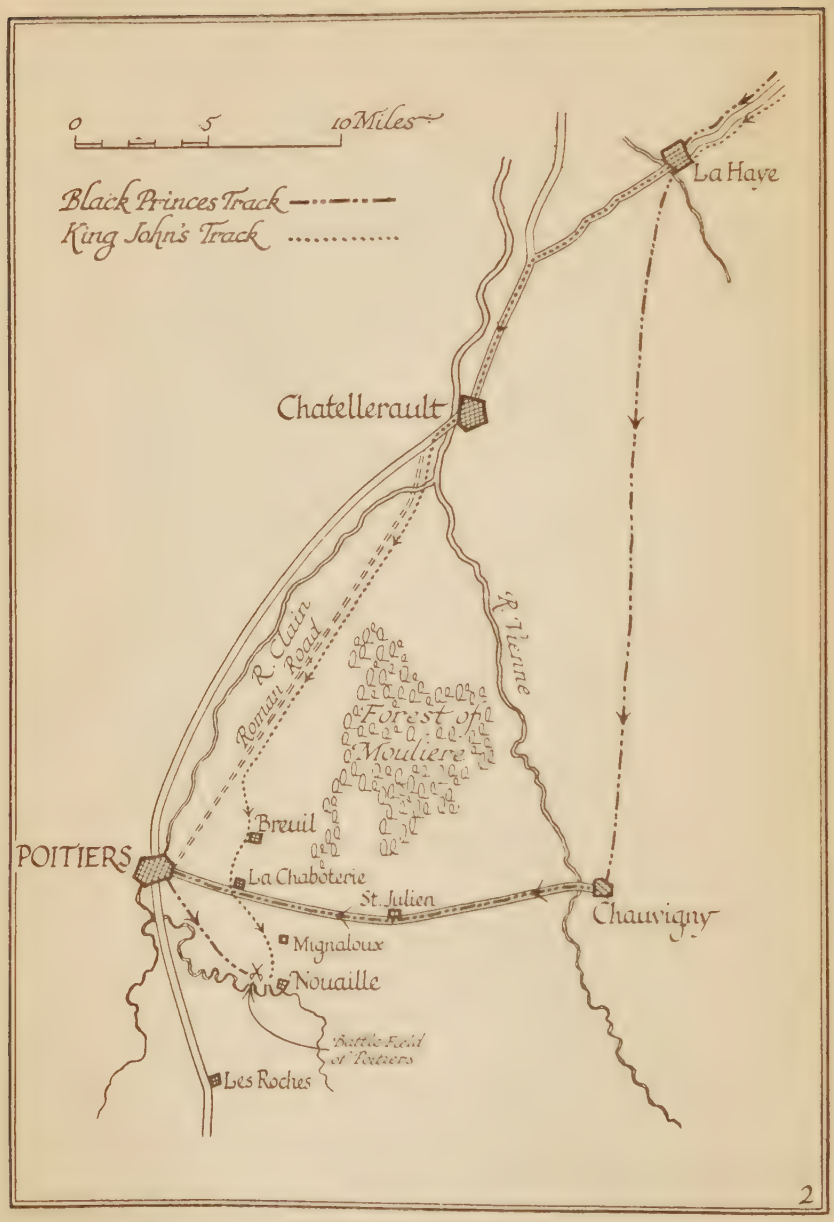
The campaign of Poitiers, 1356.

The next year, 1356, the Black Prince began a new raid starting as the first had done from Bordeaux and Gascony. He had but a small column, but already there were in it not a few commanders who were English-speaking. He himself, of course, was a French-speaking man, holding a court of the

same speech ; and it is to be noted that he never entered into the Gascon spirit or troubled to speak the Gascon tongue. He was northern French altogether : true Plantagenet. His force was of only 12,000 men, and his business was not to undertake a campaign, but to pillage and capture men for ransom. He marched right up as far as Vierzon and to the Loire, generally avoiding the difficulty of a stronghold, and only pillaging the open country. From in front of Tours he turned back, following down the old Roman road that takes one southward through Poitiers to the Garonne. His little army was still intact ; his baggage train loaded with spoil.

When we read of these recurrent devastating marches by Scotsmen into North England, by Englishmen into Scotland, by Welshmen into the Marches, by Englishmen into Wales, by Anglo-French armies throughout France, we shall make nonsense of the time if we think of them as modern campaigns, or their expressions of destruction as literal and universal. Had they been modern armies with a definite object of complete success in the tradition of the revolutionary wars and of Napoleon, the things we read of them—their perpetual activity—would have meant the destruction of our civilisation. But they were not that. When you hear that a place was burnt, it does not mean that it was wholly destroyed : it means there was random looting and the burning of some few wooden houses

You do not find the main buildings destroyed ; you do not find even the glass in the churches suffering. The narrow track through which an army passed was heavily burdened, in part pillaged, barns and occasional houses ruined, but even in the worst cases (as in that of Limoges, which we shall come to in a moment) the expressions of the time are general and exaggerated, and must not be taken literally. Things were bad enough in all conscience without that, and it is something of a marvel that on the top of the Black Death all these twenty years of sporadic war should



THE CAMPAIGN OF POITIERS

not have permanently lowered the vitality of French society.

The Valois King of France, John, had gathered against his Plantagenet cousin a great army to push back these raiders under the Black Prince. It concentrated at Chartres.

The Black Prince, marching down from near Tours by the main road, went through La Haye to Chatellerault, and then, having a force too small to attack any considerable town and burdened with loot, left the Roman road and struck east of Poitiers, making for Breuil, La Chaboterie, and Nouaillé by side lanes. Near Nouaillé was a ford over the little river Miosson, he proposed to cross there, reach the main Bordeaux road at Les Roches, and so get clean away, having avoided the obstacle of the forest of Moulière by passing to the west of it.

The King of France, coming in pursuit from Chartres, crossed the Loire at Blois and reached La Haye after the Black Prince had left it. He was a day's march behind, getting into La Haye just as the Black Prince was marching into Chatellerault. The King of France had need of recruitment and munitioning in Poitiers. He made forced marches east of the forest of Moulière to Chauvigny, then to St. Julien. As his rearguard was passing the farm of La Chaboterie it was seen by the Black Prince's vanguard, which, after delays, was coming down from the north. Even then he thought he could get away while John was in Poitiers.

The Battle of Poitiers, Sept. 19th, A.D. 1356.

His little force was leaving, on Saturday, September 17th, the farm of Maupertuis (which is about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles south-east of Poitiers), and was making for the crossing of the deep ravine of the Miosson, which runs to the west of that place, and so proceeding on his retirement southward with his booty, when he appreciated that King John of France and his great host were so close at hand that if he continued his retirement he would be caught in column of route and destroyed.

We must appreciate at this famous moment the character of the two opposed forces. King John's feudal army was far larger than the Black Prince's little column, now 7000 to 8000 fighting men. It was not under a true united command, for, as I have said, it was still purely feudal, though with many mercenaries : not a few German. But the number of trained and experienced and properly armed mounted men alone was larger than the Black Prince's command. A contemporary observer and soldier on the Black Prince's side put the enemy at 8000 mounted men at arms and 2000 archers with arbalests. The mass of the rest were a half-trained or wholly untrained rabble of footmen, as was always the case with these very large sudden levies.

On Sunday, the 18th, the Black Prince put most of his force in line before the farm of Maupertuis, a couple of miles south of the French camp and facing it. He seems at first to have intended it for a rearguard to hold off a French attack while he got the valuables and waggons away beyond the ravine of the Miosson. Later, however, when a general action was forced, he brought back all his men to the field.

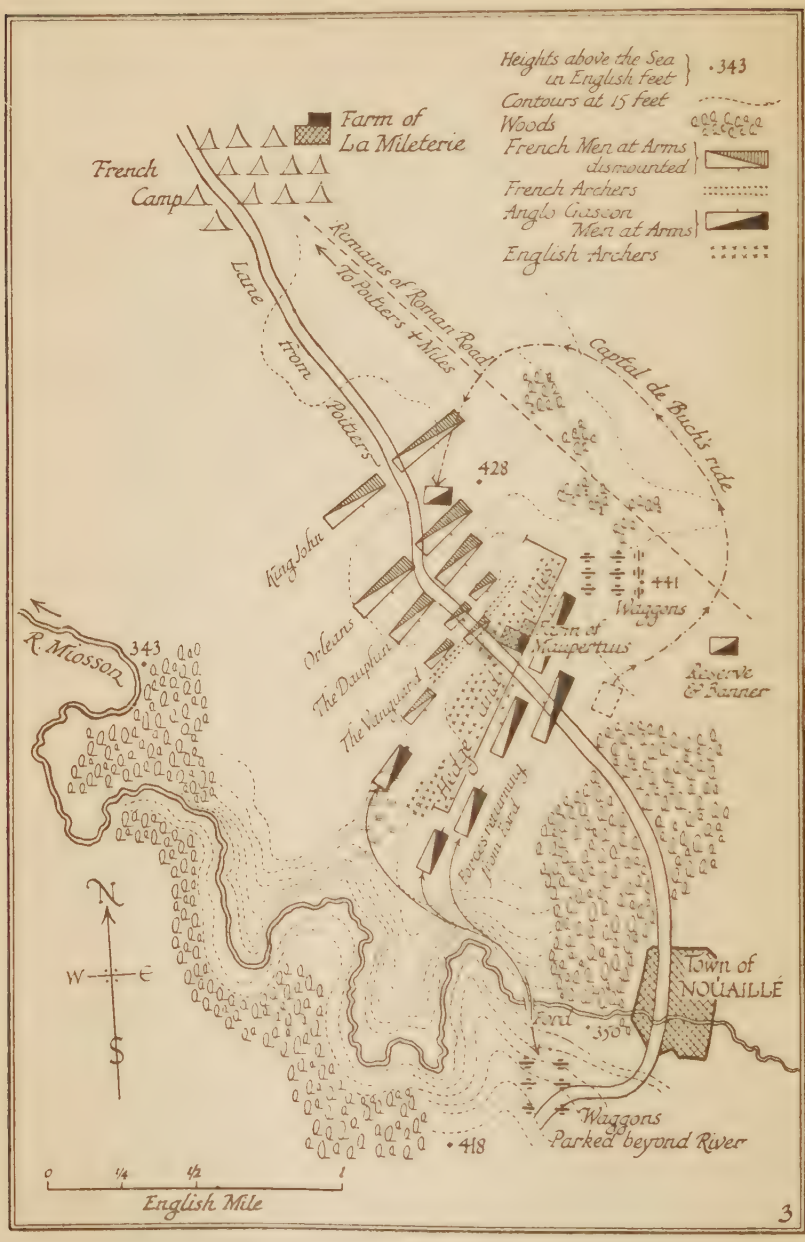
The modern reader is curious to note how, in such a situation, there was still an attempt to prevent fighting. The Papal Legate, Cardinal Talleyrand Perigord, got the King of France to state terms, and the young Black Prince was ready to accept them, "saving his honour and that of his army." Edward was willing to give up his booty and his captives, and to promise not to fight against John for seven years. But John was persuaded by one of his bishops and certain of his nobles to demand the Prince and a hundred of his gentlemen as prisoners of war. The King of France, therefore, with his great host, was in the wrong, by the standards of the time and by our standards, too, when he prepared to engage on the morrow in a battle which seemed to promise certain victory.

The startling Plantagenet success that followed, the dis-

persion of the Valois army, and the capture of the King of France himself was not, however, as at Crécy, the effect of a novel tactical instrument. Poitiers was not an archer's battle. It was the effect of lax political discipline ; of the federal character of the French State ; the breaking-up of one and then another division on the French side, and the clenching of the affair by a Gascon force of Prince Edward's (under the Captal de Buch, a Pyrenean lord) coming unexpectedly in flank upon what was left of the French feudal army, and the charge of Prince Edward's own men-at-arms under the advice of an English gentleman, Sir John Chandos. It was on the Monday, September 19th, at about 9 o'clock in the morning or a little earlier, that contact was taken between the King of France's men and the rearguard of English and Gascons which the Black Prince had left in front of Maupertuis to cover his retreat.

John's army was ordered in a special fashion to meet what were known to be the new Plantagenet tactics which had triumphed at Crécy ten years before, and the dispositions were made under the advice of a Scot, Douglas, in the King of France's service. It was drawn up, of course, in the regular, the invariable, mediæval order of three columns, which in turn would deploy into line and enter action : the first under the king's son, the Dauphin Charles, the second under the king's brother, Orleans ; the third under John himself. But the special feature on this day was the taking of nearly all the best elements—over 4000 men at arms—from the depleted columns and sending them forward as a vanguard to close with and encumber the long-bowmen, who possessed such superiority in numbers and efficiency of missiles. Three hundred picked knights came first—to be sacrified in the first attack, and to exhaust the Plantagenet quivers as they fell ; then a large group of mounted German mercenaries and the crossbow men with their arbalests.

The plan succeeded. The vanguard, in spite of the Welsh-English long-bow, got home, and the whole line



THE BATTLEFIELD OF POITIERS

became a struggling mass of two opposed and nearly equal forces.

Then came the first determining event. Warwick, bringing back a small force from the columns which had, that early morning, been sent off in retreat through the ravine, appeared on the flank of the French line and enfiladed it with the fire of his few archers. He could effect that surprise from the nature of the ground, which falls very sharply just at the left end of the English down on to the ravine. Warwick, climbing up the steep bank from the river, was hidden till he topped the rise, and then he was right on the flank of the enemy.

This surprise threw the French vanguard into confusion, but the effect was not final. The Dauphin's column—dismounted men at arms—came on and continued the pressure. He had quite insufficient numbers, and he had to meet fresh men whom the Black Prince, like Warwick, had brought up from the ravine. He fought well, and the losses on the Plantagenet side were severe, but far worse on that of their inferior opponents, who fell back.

Then came the *second* determining event. The French second line, under Orleans, caught in the falling back of the Dauphin, broke and fled. The king's line remained, but it was quite inadequate to the task of retrieving that day. Of the trained fighting men in the three columns, nearly half had been sacrificed in the vanguard. John may have had 2000 trained men—not more—under his direct command. The rest were worthless. The battle was already won when, about 11 o'clock, they came forward. The Black Prince mounted his men, knowing that the end was coming. He sent a Pyrenean lord, the Captal of Buch, to ride far round the right and take the last forlorn charge of the French in the rear. He had his standard bearer, Woodland by name, display the great banner, and himself charged with all he had. John's troops were surrounded, John himself captured. And so ended the day of Poitiers.

Nature of the victory of Poitiers.

The importance of this battle has, I know not why, been largely missed. It has been quoted with special insistence as an example of the success of the long bow. Obviously, it was not that. Crécy had been that ten years before, and Agincourt was that a long lifetime afterwards. But Poitiers was emphatically not that, it was one of those battles which were won much more by incompetence on one side than by skill on the other. It was won through the detestable organisation of Orleans' command—a third of the remaining attacking force after the vanguard was used up—and through miscalculation on the possibility of using fully armoured men on foot; at the end, through the lack of observation on the left flank, when the Captal de Buch appeared and effected the final surprise.

The long-bow failed. All its ammunition had been exhausted quite early in the struggle, and the French king's men-at-arms had got well into the mass of the Black Prince's archers, and were fighting hand to hand with the Welsh and English and Gascons long after the archery fire had ceased. What broke the French was exhaustion, through abominable staff work, and finally the Captal's flank attack.

Poitiers has been quoted also as an example of the lack of cohesion in a feudal force. That again is true of Crécy, and it is not quite so true of Poitiers; the French king's feudal force had fair mechanical cohesion, but there was bad organisation and thoroughly rotten *morale* in one critical division, which dispersed without reason.

The real (and high) importance of the battle lay in the capture of the French king, and in the effect this had upon the society of all his realm. This personal catastrophe very nearly destroyed all that toilsome gradual structure of the Capetian monarchy, built up through 400 years.

Character of the French monarchy.

The story of the Capetian monarchy discovers these crises over and over again. It was saved repeatedly by chance or the good genius of the Gauls. Looking back today on the rise and continuance of the great throne of the

West, we see it as one majestic process; but to those who lived through its centuries it was a succession of mortal perils. It might have been destroyed by Normandy and Flanders within a century of its foundation. It was within an inch of toppling over the edge centuries later when Louis XI was playing cat and mouse with Burgundy. It was in apparent dissolution, later again, when the nobility of France went Protestant in flocks a hundred years later. It was even at some risk in the mid-seventeenth century. But it survived. It was perpetually saved: until it committed one fatal blunder in permitting a foolish admixture with German blood, which turned it sluggish and destroyed its communion with the nation. But for that the crown of Hugh Capet would have survived the XVIIIth century, and would be the dominant power to-day. In its absence are sundry parliamentarians. But to return to John and Poitiers.

Effect of the capture of the French king.

The monarch was to the society of the French XIVth century—had already become to that society—what the English gentry were to be to the English XVIIIth century. Take away the monarch and the arch of society crumbled.

The immediate result of John's capture was one of those moments of anarchy into which the French periodically fall, as a preliminary to swarming again like bees. The States General was no substitute, in that vast federal territory of many provinces, for the Crown. The city of Paris could only act in isolation, the countrysides were a welter, the peasantry were rising everywhere, and it looked for a moment as though the unity of the French State had dissolved. To see the consequences as they really were, one must skip more than two years of negotiation between the captor and the captive, and come straight to the document which was signed in London on March 24th, 1359.

The abortive Treaty of London. March 24th, 1359.

Its main provision was this: the King of France recognised the King of England as *independent Sovereign* of all that Henry II had held as *feudal inferior* to the King of France. It was a complete severance of half its provinces

from the French State, and the end of France as a European unit.

We must not deceive ourselves by considering the real independence of the great feudal lords 200 years before, in Henry II's time. It is true that a Duke of Normandy, a Duke of Brittany, a Duke of Aquitaine, was possessed of the powers which a sovereign possesses. He taxed, he coined money, he raised armies, he levied war; all ordinary civil justice ended in his court. He was the main authority, and the only civil authority, connected with the great Church appointments. But in his own mind, and in the minds of men, he was none the less the dependant and the inferior of a still higher feudal lord, the king in Paris; and each feudal unit thus held could be in theory (and was, as we know, in *practice* later) reassumed by the over-lord, the king. So true is it, that a habit of thought is the bond of society. The feudal idea governed all that relationship. Henry II, the Plantagenet, was a king in England. He was not a king beyond the seas; just as to-day a man may be an absolute owner of land in the country, but however long his lease, however secure his tenure, however important his house, may only be a leaseholder in London, subject to all the servitudes of lease-holding. Save for the feudal idea, mediæval France *was not*. Let the French king release the feudal bond, and France ceased to be.

By this signature, given in London on the 24th March, 1359, all Normandy and Maine and Anjou and Brittany, the whole mass of Aquitaine in its fullest definition, everything between the Garonne and the Pyrenees, passed in full sovereignty to Edward III. Had the thing gone through there would have been created a great bilingual kingdom, the governing element in which would have been still, for the most part, French-speaking, the centre of which would have been in the Court of Westminster, which the newly forming common English language of its subjects was about to enter.

What the outcome in history would have been if this treaty had been carried out we cannot tell, save that it would have been enormous in scale. The fact that the treaty was not carried out has confused the exceptional gravity of the moment in the eyes of many historians—who have the advantage of knowing what the future was to bring —but in the eyes of contemporaries that tremendous capitulation was very real, and seemed final. Upon such terms only could John obtain his release; and to the immense territory thus abandoned was specially added Calais and the county of Ponthieu (the dowry of Edward III's mother), commanding the Straits of Dover.

Effect in France of the Treaty of London.

The news of the surrender raised violent protest in the States General and in the capital of France; a protest which was confusedly but unanimously echoed in the provinces. The direct result of that protest was not a re-action capable of setting the French nation up again. It was the exact opposite. What it produced was a new invasion by the King of England far more serious, on a far larger scale, more powerful and coming much nearer final success, than had the very partial advantage of Crécy, or even the supreme luck of Poitiers.

Edward's new great expedition of November, A.D. 1359.

Here was an army on the march out of all proportion in size to those highly disciplined but small raiding bodies, which had achieved the two earlier victories of 1346 and 1356. With such an army and with France in its then condition, Edward might very well hope to be crowned and anointed at Rheims: to step into John's shoes, and to establish that United Kingdom of the Plantagenets from the Pyrenees to the Scotch borders, and perhaps to the Grampians, which all his ancestors had dreamed of.

He attempts to enforce his claim.

What his great-grandson, Henry V, so nearly did, Edward also, on this occasion, nearly did, though in another fashion. The campaign which thus all but changed the colour of Europe was remarkable for its winter character. It showed that Edward intended to take full advantage of

Edward's winter march to Rheims in 1359,

the moment: France exhausted by the plague, distracted and chaotic through the king's capture; himself with a large force intact, and his territory untouched. His great host set out in three columns by three marching roads (it was too large for a single line) in the November of the year 1359. It advanced straight on Rheims, and sat down to besiege the town, to take it, and therein to celebrate the coronation of its General. Such force as the crippled and distracted French regency could gather dared not challenge Edward's great columns to the field; it only harassed their march.[1]

What seems to have made Edward fail was, strategically, that his effort over-reached itself; the task was beyond its powers. After nearly seven weeks of siege the attempt to reduce Rheims was abandoned, and in that deep winter the host went on south-eastwards towards Burgundy; the terror of it was such that the Duke of Burgundy ransomed himself from invasion by a vast payment. Edward's columns, presumably heavily reduced by such an effort in such a season, turned towards Paris, and sat down before the walls of that city on April 7th, 1460.

and Paris.

There is something of 1812 on a small scale about the whole story, though the result was not so immediate; indeed, on the surface, the result was a triumph.

Paris was not taken any more than Rheims had been. But John's people were in a defeated mood. Negotiations for peace were begun, they were debated at Chartres, and concluded in a little village just outside that town; a place called Brétigny [2] on which account the whole affair is generally known as the Treaty of Brétigny; though, as we shall see in a moment, a better term (were not the name of Brétigny consecrated by use) would be the Treaty of Calais.

[1] The modern English reader will be amused to hear that young Chaucer was in that army of Edward's in 1359. What is more, he was captured!

[2] If you take the little tramway which crosses the Beauce S.E. from Chartres to Domeville, you come to Brétigny about 4 miles out.

The articles of that famous draft confirmed all the southern cessions of the Treaty of London, and they were signed on the 8th May, 1360. It seemed, indeed, the final achievement of a great soldier and the crowning of his chief campaign. It greatly helped the consolidation of English social unity which the language was so rapidly cementing. The triumph of it was felt throughout England, and when it was finally signed on October 24th at Calais, the French king released, and the great struggle apparently at an end, one might have thought that Western Europe had been transformed.

Treaty of Brétigny May 8th, A.D. 1360.

Ratified at Calais, October 24th, A.D. 1360.

But here intervenes a strange accident. *There was one verbal change between the draft at Brétigny and the final document ratified at Calais.* I do not pretend that a slight and ambiguous verbal change on parchment could ever be the cause of the revolution that followed, but it served at once as a pretext and as a symptom of what lay behind the minds of the French negotiators.

But with one essential modification.

All that better half of France which had been Plantagenet fiefs: Aquitaine, Poitiers, Anjou, Normandy, Maine, the central mountains, and Calais itself, and the County of Ponthieu, as well, were to go to the Plantagenet for ever; but under these terms, "to be held as the King of France had held them." It was a phrase apparently straightforward enough, and meaning—one would say—"in full sovereignty," but one could quibble with it. For instance, the King of France had been since 1204 Duke of Normandy also. But he could—or, rather, a hired lawyer could—maintain that he *held* Normandy not as king but as duke. So any one who "held" it in future as he did, could hold it as duke and would have to do homage. Much more important was a mere omission which presumably the French negotiators arranged. In this final document, ratified at *Calais* on the 24th October, 1360, there was no mention in specific terms of the King of France's abandoning his right *to the allegiance of his former subjects in the ceded territories.* It was implied,

Its terms.

of course, in all that went before; but it was not definitely stated. They could plead that they still held themselves to be King John's men.

The ambiguity was made use of. In what followed, it was the moral basis, or excuse in feudal morals, for the ousting of the Plantagenet. And what an example all this quibbling is of the decay which had come over the old sincere feudal spirit of the earlier Middle Ages!

. . . . . .

From the Treaty of Brétigny to the death of Edward III is a matter of fifteen years.

Those fifteen years play little part of a positive sort in English history. They form, however, the period when the new English-speaking England of the later Middle Ages was forming. At their close the men who had been active before the Black Death were already old. The men in public life could not remember the earlier time. They depend upon two main influences—the premature senility of the king, who had hitherto been so great a soldier in Western eyes, and the continued rise of the Lancastrian name: that is, the increasing power and influence of—at last the real governance of England by—Edward III's fourth son, John, born in Ghent in 1340, called thence "John of Gaunt," now married to the heiress of the great Lancaster property, and formally created Duke of Lancaster by his father at this time (1362).

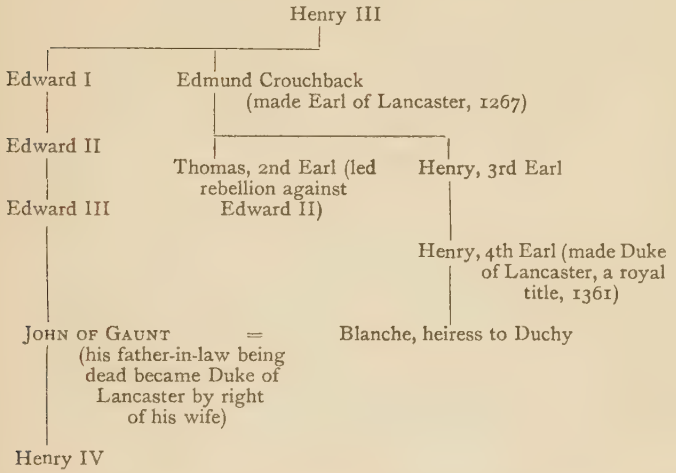
John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.

This last, the overshadowing of England by Lancaster's wealth, is the real note of the time.

We get as yet no sight of the Lancastrian usurpation above ground—but the seed is sown. When nearly all that had been won by the Treaty of Brétigny had been lost—that is, within some two years or a little more of Edward's death—the thing is apparent. Nor would the Lancastrian branch take the place it does in history had Edward's eldest son, the Black Prince, survived; but in him, as in his father, there was a weakness of blood, which came, we must suppose, from

the perpetual inter-marriage of the Plantagenets; he died before his time and before he could become king.

THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER


Henry III
Edward I
Edmund Crouchback
(made Earl of Lancaster, 1267)
Edward II
Thomas, 2nd Earl (led rebellion against Edward II)
Henry, 3rd Earl
Edward III
Henry, 4th Earl (made Duke of Lancaster, a royal title, 1361)
John of Gaunt = Blanche, heiress to Duchy
(his father-in-law being dead became Duke of Lancaster by right of his wife)
Henry IV

What it was in his younger brother, John of Gaunt, which bestowed apparently greater vitality, or at any rate greater energy upon him, it would be difficult to say. What we do know is that he had a very large and constant revenue from his marriage with the immensely rich heiress of the Lancastrian house, and that wealth, perhaps, counted most of all factors, save one, which was a certain mixture of cunning tenacity and far-sightedness. You find it in John himself, in his son Henry of Bolingbroke, in his grandson Henry V. It entirely disappeared in the great-grandson, the last Henry of that line: saintly, too much distraught, forgiving, defeated, unfortunate. Causes of his preponderance.

Edward III, the father, helped such a career in his younger son John. In giving first his father-in-law, and then himself, the title of duke, he did a new thing. "Duke" (which in their conversation and official document, outside Latin, was "Duc") was a French title, the idea of which was closely connected with royalty. To give a man this novel badge in

England meant the emphasising of his connection with the throne. Edward had made his eldest son, the Black Prince, " Duke " of Cornwall when he was still a little boy in 1336—but that was part of the " appanage " of Cornwall : of Royal land handed over to provide income to the heir. Henry of Lancaster, the father-in-law of John of Gaunt, had been made Duke of Lancaster in 1351 as the king's wealthiest relative—and that was a precedent. But, anyhow, after 1362, John of Gaunt's possession of such a title made him seem nearer the throne.

We must also remember that his health—an important factor—was far superior to his elder brother's, and that he was ten years younger. When the Queen, Philippa of Hainault, died in 1369, leaving her husband prematurely aged and incapable of active rule, John of Lancaster was a vigorous young man of under thirty. Edward the Black Prince was already a decrepit and ailing man in middle age.

This period, onwards, then, from Brétigny may properly be called the beginning—but only the faint beginning—of the Lancastrian usurpation. Abroad, the Black Prince was getting great renown in a bad cause : fighting in Spain upon the side of Pedro the Cruel. It is an interesting story, especially interesting as a campaign, with its use of the Pass of Roncesvalles in winter, the outflanking of the Basque Hills, and the fine victory of Navarette ; but it does not concern directly the history of this country, save in so far as it continues to illustrate both the military value of Edward III's son and the strength and cohesion of the trained troops of English origin. At least, this campaign only affects English history in so far as that it was the origin in the Black Prince of the disease which was to kill him. As for the fruits of that Spanish campaign : to England there were none (it was not a Plantagenet enterprise, but a personal one), and even the Black Prince's ally reaped nothing of it in the long run. He was killed by his brother in less than two years after the

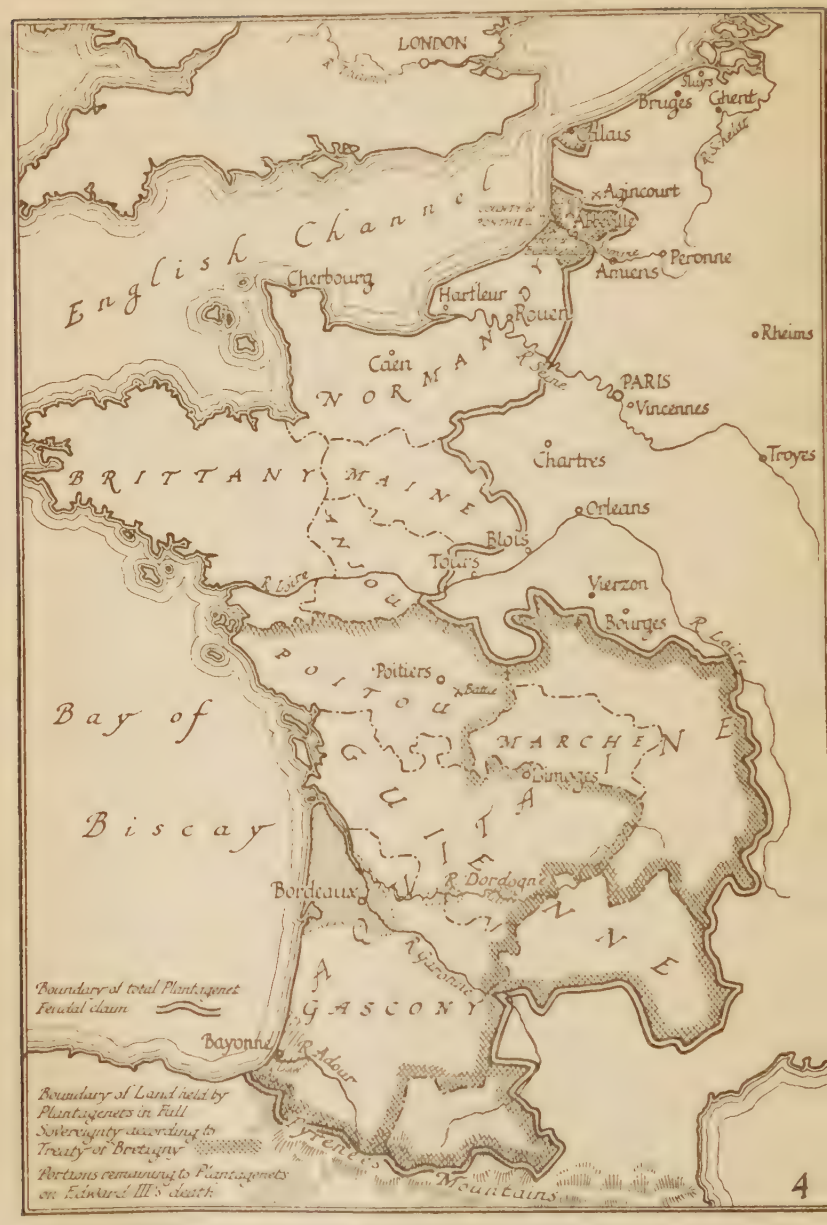
victory of Navarette, which Edward had won for him, and that brother took the throne in security.

Meanwhile, all the results of Edward's fighting in France collapsed. As to the *pretext* of the French recovery, it was of little importance morally or historically. The ambiguity of the Treaty of Brétigny had left it uncertain, when the articles were finally signed at Calais, whether the old Plantagenet fiefs abroad, reassumed by Edward III's crown, were to be held in full sovereignty or no, and had even left it uncertain what full execution was required on either side to make the treaty of final effect. But the *cause* of the French recovery was mere numbers coupled with the length of time that had passed since a true social unity had existed between the feudal lords of England and the feudal lords of Normandy, Poitiers, Guienne—nearly 150 years. Added to all this was the new division in language. Already in 1362 the speech of the Chancellor opening the King's Parliament had been made in English. In 1363 the pleadings of the courts were allowed in English (though, in fact, a mixed French jargon continued for generations, and English legal terms to-day are a clot of fossil French) and, before Edward's death in 1377, the mass of the Plantagenet officer class and administration was English-speaking: still knowing French, but not thinking in French: knowing it as a learnt tongue.

Loss of the French conquests.

Causes thereof.

A further, purely military, reason of the breakdown was that the forces at work on either side, quite diverse, were suitable to the French effort *after* Brétigny, unsuitable to the English. The English were better suited for marching successfully through invaded land and challenging pitched battles against superior numbers, for the Plantagenets had trained armies largely professional, a greater cohesion, a concentration of every kind — territorial, financial, and political — which the Valois had not; but, on the other side, there were very great numbers, innumerable castles and walled towns, the lords and people of whom were in sympathy with Paris, the necessity, therefore, for a highly



EDWARD III'S FAILURE IN FRANCE

dispersed Plantagenet effort, and a growing (though still obscure) feeling of nationality—at any rate, north of the Garonne—which was emphasised by the increasingly national character of the English forces with their new language spreading among the governing classes (the Black Prince and his court never learnt it familiarly : they were wholly of the French culture to the end), and with their distinct national organisation under arms : less feudal, more professional.

The hero of the French recovery was du Guesclin, but he was only the greatest of a swarm. The whole land was filled with the French re-capture of castles, raid, and counter-raid, with a general increasing balance month after month against Edward's power overseas.

There was a crisis more than seven years after the treaty. King John, who had been captured at Poitiers, and for whom an enormous ransom was due, had returned to London as a prisoner and died there (at the Savoy) in the spring of 1364. In January, 1369, the new King of France, Charles, demanded homage for Aquitaine from the Black Prince. Edward would wisely have compromised. He offered to give up his claim to the crown of France, and to yield his shadowy rights over Normandy, Anjou, and Maine on condition that he might be full sovereign of the south and west. But the one thing to which the mass of the French nobility would never submit was the alienation of French territory from the feudal bond—however vague—which bound the whole country to Paris. They urged their king to make war ; and from May, 1369, the re-conquest was rapid. Not only did the French fill the channel with their ships, but the special efforts of the Black Prince and of John of Gaunt himself were like blows struck against quicksand. They penetrated the country with strong forces. It closed up behind their marching. The Black Prince, already broken by disease, avenged his honour by a fearful massacre of the people of Limoges. In his eyes the surrender of Limoges to the King of France's men was treason, for the citizens had

The massacre of Limoges, 1370.

assented, and he believed himself their true lord. That was his excuse; but the horrible thing was worthless in effect, and the unfortunate man guilty of it, who watched it from a litter in his illness, might as well have saved himself the cruelty.

He was a dying man—though it took him six years to die. During those six years he hoped and even believed that his little surviving son, Richard, four years old in the year of Limoges—to become King of England while yet a child—would carry on the glory of the legitimate line. The Black Prince was fortunate in that he died without foreseeing what was to come.

John of Lancaster marched right through French territory from north to south, and gathered no fruit from that expensive, prodigious, effort, which cannot be called a campaign. All the prestige of Edward's military story was gone. Even the hold on Southern Scotland, which had been tenaciously maintained with varying fortunes, failed. On the continent the breakdown was complete.

The remaining Plantagenet possessions in France by 1374.

By the end of 1374 the Plantagenets, still firmly fixed in Calais, held elsewhere no more than the seaports of the Garonne and the Adour, some few inland strongholds, and here and there a castle on the Dordogne. All for which these wars had been fought, save Calais, was lost; and, in the south, less was now in the real possession of the English Crown than had been before the war was begun—thirty-seven years before.

The last three years of the reign dragged on. The king was sunk in an approach to imbecility; his son John really reigned. It seemed inevitable that he should be at least regent when the child Richard should succeed, and he was manifestly himself considering his chance of the throne, especially after his elder brother, the Black Prince, was dead (June 8th, 1376).

Death of the Black Prince (June 8th, 1376).

On June 21st, 1377, Edward, no longer remembering Crécy or any other thing, a man not yet sixty-five—in

appearance eighty, white, weak, long-bearded, nursed or neglected by the intriguing woman who held him in his palace of Eltham—could just see the Crucifix held before him (while his servants plundered the rooms of the house), shed a few tears, whispered a word or two, and died.

Death of Edward III (June 21st, 1377).

To this critical moment, when the king lay dying, when the Black Prince was dead, when his son, a young child of ten, was nominally King of England, when John of Gaunt was attempting to master the realm, belong a number of disturbing movements in the social and religious life of the country: a widespread ill-ease between tenant and lord, an open preaching of revolution in which the name of John Ball is most prominent, an anti-papal or anti-hierarchic ferment which took a number of forms (some contradictory of others), and in which the best remembered name is that of Wycliffe. They merit a passing examination.

A Dynasty is important.

I have insisted throughout these pages on the importance of personality in kingship during the Middle Ages. It was to remain the chief matter of society till long after the Reformation. When kingship was disturbed by the incompetence, senility, or childhood of a king, all the community was affected, as is to-day an industrial nation by exceptional economic strain. Such a situation, therefore, as that of the years 1376-84 might be compared for its character of crisis in England with the years terminating and following the Great War.

Yet even more important than this turmoil in the moral forces of government was its coincidence with the universal crisis throughout Christendom in the matter of the Papacy (which was now entering its deepest period of degradation, the Great Schism) and the *maturing* of the fruit sown by the Black Death. For, as was remarked upon an earlier page, the full social effect of a great disaster or change is not felt till those fixed in character *before* its advent are grown old or are dead. By 1376-77 the men who had been of active service in the State *prior* to the Black Death, the men who

were then thirty and more, had passed their sixtieth year. The new generation, whose formative years had followed the Black Death, and which had therefore felt the real effect of it upon themselves, as their elders could not, were now in the saddle.

Chief of these by far was John of Gaunt, the young Duke of Lancaster. In 1376-77 he was still in his thirties, and had round him in a shifting group the various prominent, talented, or merely intrusive men who could take advantage of the nation's misfortunes. Englishmen were embittered against authority, which had lost all the brilliant trophies of Crécy and Poitiers, save Calais and a greatly reduced hold on Gascony. Their fellows had been driven from France. But Lancaster, after all, had made the final effort to retrieve the situation, and though he had failed, that effort was remembered. His plotting for a usurpation (which finally succeeded in the hands of his son) was unpopular. The people always stood by their rightful king, whatever his faults or incapacities, and the little child who succeeded to Edward III's senile decay and death was their anointed head. Instinctively, the populace felt that an unlawful ousting of the lawful line would benefit, at their expenses, those masters of theirs, the village lords and the wealthy churchmen, against whom their souls were now rebellious. But, none the less, John the Prince was in by far the strongest position for leadership, and one and another large group of malcontents or fishers in troubled water would successively rally to him.

Of such groups, one was the mixed and confused but large and increasing one which was at issue—from very varying motives—with the official Church: those few enthusiasts who were impatient with its sterility and legalism, or indignant with evil living or avarice in some of its members, the more numerous who had lost respect for the clergy through the permanent lowering of clerical culture after the pestilence, the largest body, by far, whose very simple motive was relief from the burden of Church and monastic rents and dues or the less excusable hope of being able, in some convulsion, to

loot that treasure. Among these malcontents the most frequently heard name was that of John Wycliffe. (The archaic spelling is customary, though even in his own time one gets it in the more modern form of Wiclif; to-day we should probably have the name as Wickliff).

The position and career of John Wycliffe.

The position of the man himself, and his whole personality, has, of course, been absurdly exaggerated. This was inevitable from the fact that he appears in connection with the first important heretical movement in an England which, long after the confused political situation which thrust him forward was forgotten, more than 200 years after his death, became in the XVIIth century definitely anti-Catholic. While that revolution was accomplishing the obscured name of Wycliffe, hardly in the first class even during his own lifetime, was revived by the reformers of the XVIth century in connection with the propaganda of their at first small and unpopular school, and in a hundred years had become unduly famous. Save for that historical accident, the success of the Reformation in England, he would hardly be remembered outside theological lecture rooms.

But though the modern position of the man is mythical and inflated, he was not without his minor place in that diseased generation, produced throughout Europe by the effects of the plague. At any rate, so many modern Englishmen are still excited by his name, that a modern English history must delay to notice it at some length; though reluctantly, for such a digression is out of scale.

John Wycliffe took his name from the village of Wycliffe, which stands on the Yorkshire bank of the Tees, just opposite Barnard Castle and, likely enough, was connected with the French-descended nobles of that manor. By an ironic accident which we often find curiously associated with such movements, this family remained Catholic in sympathy long after the mass of the nation had lost its religion after 1605, and some fraction of the local people maintain Catholicism to this day.

We do not know when he was born, but certainly late in the first half of the XIVth century; he took his doctorate in 1372 and, allowing him to be of age when he began his studies, that might put the date of his birth about 1335. He was, then, of the batch not out of their teens when the Black Death fell, and of the generation which was affected by its results. He was on the foundation of Balliol (naturally enough, as the lords of Barnard Castle were the founders of that college), and may have been master of the little place during a short period, sometime later than 1356, and earlier than 1361; but there is no reasonable doubt that he had already been made head of another small foundation in the university called "Canterbury Hall" as early as 1365. This establishment had been started by an Archbishop of Canterbury with a provision that the master should be a religious. But Wycliffe was a secular priest. The irregularity was noticed. In 1367, therefore, he was turned out by the Archbishop of the day, and a religious of the Mendicant Orders put in his place. Wycliffe appealed to Rome and lost his case by a decision given in 1371.

This was the natural origin of his antagonism to the Mendicant Orders and, for the matter of that, to the Papal See.

I say "there is no reasonable doubt" upon the matter, though, of course, it has been argued against by recent scholars attempting to find a less obvious origin for a perfectly normal source of grievance.[1] Anything can be argued; but the contemporary evidence is quite clear. A grievance against the government of the Church, or of religious against seculars, or of seculars against religious, is a commonplace throughout the mediæval history of Christendom.

[1] In the heat of religious fervour even this plain piece of history has been challenged. It has been pointed out that there *may* have been two John Wycliffes: one head of Canterbury Hall, the other the pamphleteer. It is not mathematically impossible, but it is about as likely as two Benjamin Jowetts in Victorian Oxford.

The interest of Wycliffe's career does not lie in his personal motives for his quarrels. It lies in the fact that he was a man of energy with a good following in the university, whose grievance happened to coincide with a great political movement. In *this* he could be used—and was used—by men far more powerful than himself : to wit, by the men who were now beginning the Lancastrian usurpation. The official organisation of the Church was with legitimacy, that is, with the rightful Plantagenet line ; with Richard's succession to power, and that of his children after him. Therefore the Lancastrian party was at issue with that organisation on its political side.

They found ready to hand, Wycliffe, with already some following in the university, and already remarkable for his propagation of sundry old theories which had been floating about a long time, and which had crystallised in the works of a great man of the previous generation, also connected with Balliol, Fitz Ralph, Archbishop of Dublin. In the Universities of Europe, generally, these theories which Wycliffe copied were more connected with the great name of Marsilius of Padua.

Wycliffe had maintained, with a special vigour, two general ideas (among others), which had no particular connection except that both conformed with his private grievances. The first was that the Mendicant Orders (Franciscans and Dominicans) were taking too much power and depriving the ordinary secular clergy of revenue rightly their due ; the other was the much more general thesis that the right to property, coming as it did ultimately from God, was dependent upon the owner's being in a state of grace.

There was, I say, nothing original about this contention : it was a very old way of attacking those whom one thought to have too much money or land or right of presentation to livings. It was the natural refuge of those who objected to the power of property where they discovered what seemed to them an unjust exercise of it ; but people who denounce

one form of wealth nearly always play into the hands of another rival form of wealth ; and this weakening of the sanctity of property by absurd theories did not threaten great wealth. It only promised a chance for rich laymen to despoil rich churchmen.

The whole thing was very like the modern Socialist movement, which, attacking the principle of property by an abstract, metaphysical whim, is found, while denouncing landowners and employers small and great, to be playing directly into the hands of international finance. So Wycliffe played into the hands of the immensely wealthy Lancaster and his hungry faction.

Wycliffe, full of his grievances against Pope and Friars, took over FitzRalph's work on " Divine Dominion " and began attacking, to begin with, the financial power of the Church, illogically mixing it up with an attack upon the monks. He himself, of course, was all the while enjoying not only one benefice, but two, and stoutly claiming a third. This again is what we find in all such theorists. The Socialist to-day is commonly enough a man of property, and often a rather grasping business man at that.

The old heretical theory against absolute right to property, thus revived by Wycliffe, appealed strongly to a generation which was by this time filled with the results of the Black Death, just as Socialist theories already appeal to-day to a Europe which has suffered the shock of the Great War ; and just as international finance is using our modern disturbance, so did the beginnings of the Lancastrian usurpation use Wycliffe and his following at Oxford.

The hierarchy drew up from Wycliffe's pamphleteering eighteen propositions to be submitted as heretical to Rome. They are all of them capable of defence in the abstract (e.g. that an excommunication may well be an error of temporal judgment or a wicked act, leaving the excommunicated morally immune) ; but the tendency of the man's teaching was clearly to attack the power, and especially the financial

power, of the hierarchy, and even the discipline of the Church. There was, however, no savour of that special spirit which we call, to-day, Protestantism. For instance, Wycliffe is very insistent on the right of any priest to absolve—because his object is to protest against the power of ecclesiastical superiors to reserve cases. The truth may be put generally by saying that the movement of 1377 and 1378, in which Wycliffe's was the most prominent name, was no more connected with the spirit of what is called to-day Protestantism than the XVIIth century support of ale against spirits was a forerunner of modern teetotalism.

The Lancastrians defended Wycliffe in a sort of riot which took place in St. Paul's Cathedral, but the complicated political intrigue of the day also led to his being supported at moments by the opposite party, who wanted the advantage of his popularity ; for there is no doubt that his defence of the ordinary priest's income against incursion, and his attack upon papal financial exaction, had given him such popularity. He was in the Parliament of 1378, presumably called in as a Doctor of Theology, for we must always remember that it is a false reading of history to regard the mediæval Parliaments as highly defined bodies, let alone as governing bodies —all that is a much later conception.

Before going on to the next development of the situation, we must remember that this disturbance in men's minds coincided with the Great Schism, and came after a long train of events weakening the official Church throughout the century.

Since 1309 the Papacy had been removed from Rome and seated in Avignon. That town (once a hotbed of the Albigensian movement) had fallen from Toulouse to the King of Paris, had gone as endowment to the kingdom of Naples, had been sold by it to the Papacy in 1348. It was not technically subservient to the French Crown. Nevertheless, the Papacy at Avignon became a French thing. The electing cardinals came to have a French majority.

The Papacy had become a French thing, just when the national feeling against France was becoming conscious and was inflamed by victory. Further, it was lowered in men's eyes by a new series of legislation against papal claims of which "Provisors" and "Præmunire" are the catch-words. I will describe it under the next reign when we come to the main statute of 1393. The last of the French Popes, Gregory XI, did, indeed, leave Avignon in 1376, and died in Rome in 1378, and then followed the election of an Italian, Urban VI. But the cardinals who had elected him became dissatisfied, and later in the same year elected *another* Pope —Robert of Geneva—Clement VIII—and *he* went to live at Avignon. Henceforward, for nearly forty years there were two and (at the end) three rival Popes, each with his "obedience"; France and England, for instance, taking opposite sides. The effect on discipline may be imagined.

Of course, like everything in history that excites religious passion, the story of the trouble has been warped and its effect put vastly out of proportion. There was a constant effort to heal the schism, and during all its duration men held as firmly as ever to the papal institution, in spite of a quarrel on its rightful occupancy. The thing had no doctrinal effect save a novel attempt to ascribe hitherto unheard of powers to a General Council. Still, such as it was, the doubt on *who* held the final authority relaxed the power of that authority in principle. The rivals could not pronounce with the majesty of superiors. They had to court the support of governments, and such a state of things gravely lessened the moral power of the Holy See.

Meanwhile, something very much more important than Wycliffe and his pamphlets had taken place—and that was the coming to a head of the great social disturbance caused by the Black Death.

That shaking-up of society had, though men did not know it, severed the roots of the feudal system. Feudal terms were maintained, the feudal concept remained alive for

generations, but the feudal fact was rapidly disappearing. The serf was turning into the peasant. Money payments, originally exceptional, beginning to be familiar before the plague, after it more and more rapidly ousted personal service on the lord's land; and money rentals gradually ousted the realities of personal tenure. As nearly always happens with revolutionary movements, it was not the suffering, still less the weakness, of the rebels which produced rebellion. On the contrary, it was the opportunity and the strength of those who felt themselves to be oppressed which made the revolutionary movement possible. It is not the misery of those who rise so much as their power to rise which does the trick, and the well-fed peasant half-owner, the (less numerous) well-paid labourer, was formidable.[1] Long before Wycliffe was heard of, men had been going up and down England—the one whose name has come down to us permanently is that of the priest, John Ball—fiercely declaiming against the injustice of organised society, with its inequalities, the oppressions suffered by the mass that tilled the land, and the unrighteous advantage of lordship, clerical and lay, over common humanity. There is no direct connection between Wycliffe's movement and this big social upheaval: they were even largely contradictory (e.g. Wycliffe's hatred of Franciscans, the peasants' support of them). But this indirect connection—a common discontent with a world in which institutions no longer corresponded with social facts.

I will speak of that considerable movement—one of those many vigorous popular armed protests in which the English of old excelled and of which the last was to be crushed in blood under Elizabeth—in its own place. Meanwhile, we must bear it in mind as contemporary with the action of Wycliffe and his companions. It was just before the peasants' revolt that Wycliffe added to his other activities in discussion certain dissertations upon the Real Presence.

[1] A day's wages in 1378 gave a week's essential food for one man.

Here, again, we must beware of reading history backwards. It was no new thing for a man who found himself prominent and a leader to take up, as a sort of badge, some theological debate. Minute discussion upon mystery was the intellectual occupation of the time, and a man in Wycliffe's position almost owed it to his own reputation to start something of the sort. There is, indeed, some vague connection between his almost incomprehensible argumentations round and about the real presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and his general irritation with the power of the official organisation of the Church. But it is a great historical error to make too much of it. It was no serious discussion. It had no effect on the thought of the time. It soon died out. It had no relation of cause and effect to the much later fundamental denial of the XVIth century. Moreover, there was nothing original in it. Every attack upon the Church for generations past had brought about some argufying or other upon the most profound of all Christian mysteries. It was a subject too tempting to be avoided; and (as we saw in the case of Berengarius) the first awakening of the European mind from the Dark into the active Middle Ages, before the Crusades, at once provoked a violent discussion on the nature of the Presence.

Moreover, Wycliffe was never personally condemned. He died (and died at Mass) in the enjoyment of his benefice and, presumably, in the enjoyment of the Faith within his own heart. Certain of his followers were made to retract. But he himself was not disturbed, and the impression left upon anyone who will read his explanation of his views is that he is trying, in such explanation, to make clear how really orthodox he is; just as Pelagius had done hundreds of years before, and as the apologists of Jansenius were to do centuries later.

Much more important as a piece of policy was the setting up of the dead text of Scripture as a counter authority against the living voice of the living Church. It was an

obvious move, for the authority of Scripture was everywhere and always admitted. But the special opportunity now found in England was the presence at last of a universal vernacular tongue, the thing we call " English " to-day.

Here two historical facts which still have an unfamiliar sound even to-day—but facts all the same—must be emphasised :—

(1) It is possible, but not probable, that Wycliffe and his companions were the first to translate the whole of the Scriptures into this newly consolidated national language which we call English.

(2) It is nearly certain that this final and complete Wycliffite translation has now disappeared ; at least, that no copy of it can be discovered.

I have said that these historical statements are still very unfamiliar. Therefore, at the risk of digression, the proofs of them must be advanced.

(1) It is possible, but not probable, that a Wycliffite translation was the first complete translation of holy writ into what we call " English," i.e. the then new language which is essentially what we speak to-day.

It is *possible* because, as a new universal and standard tongue common to manorial lord, scholar, and peasant, the language had not held such a position for more than quite a few years when these discussions on the hierarchy and their authority began. A set of men setting out to compile a translation of the Vulgate for Englishmen at large early in the last quarter of the XIVth century may be compared to a group of men setting out to write a complete history to-day of the Great War. There is no reason, other things being equal, why one group, setting out to write it with the unorthodox object of cracking up Germans and Turks should not publish a little before another orthodox group setting out to write it with the object of cracking up the allies. The opportunity is so recent that either group may be first in the field.

But, on the other hand, it is not *probable* that Wycliffe and his followers issued the first complete English vernacular Bible, for two strong reasons :—

(*a*) A negative one. In all the voluminous Wycliffite remains there is not a trace of the claim to be the first in such an effort. There is plenty of insistence upon the appeal to Scripture against the Church or the authorities of the Church, but no statement of the absence of a text or novelty of providing one. It is difficult to believe that if so great a labour had been a complete innovation its initiators would have been indifferent to their position. Indeed, such an indifference would be unique in the history of literature. And if it be asked why, with a vernacular Bible in existence, a second one was attempted, the answer is that men in opposition prefer their own instruments. There are numerous copies of the English Prayer-book. Yet a man wishing to prove that it permits the Mass might well reprint it with a preface of his own for comment.

(*b*) A positive argument. When the ecclesiastical authorities proceed against Lollard versions of Scripture they specifically mention heretical origin ; and the copies they order to be sought out and seized are not translations as such, but only translations objected to on account of their origin, and presumably the unorthodox comment attached to them. They seem to take for granted an orthodox version, and are at pains to forbid only one particular sort of version, to wit, a version made by a private individual without the leave of his ecclesiastical superiors.

(2) It is nearly certain that the version which Wycliffe and his followers compiled has disappeared, save for one unfinished copy, and that what modern people have come to

call "Wycliffe's Bible" is not Wycliffe's Bible at all, but the orthodox English version of the later middle ages.

There have come down to us in a great number of manuscript copies a vernacular English Bible of the XIVth century. It is now generally known as Wycliffe's translation, and, on the premise that it was so, a great and scholarly edition of it was prepared in the mid-XIXth century. When the two arguments in favour of its being the Wycliffe version are set forth they will be seen to be strong and even, if the rebutting arguments are unknown or unheard, overwhelming:—

(*a*) We have remaining a draft translation in several hands reaching almost to the end of Baruch, connected with and in part actually bearing the name of Hereford, one of Wycliffe's Oxford followers. This version can be represented as an original from which the widely disseminated vernacular versions though different in idiom, may have been derived.

(*b*) We find that *a very few* of these copies have a prologue tacked on to them. It presents some passages which are strongly Wycliffite. This prologue is printed in our standard edition as an integral part of the work, and it is the opinion of competent scholars that these plainly unorthodox, and as plainly Lollard passages, are not interpolations, but one with the whole preface.

But the opposing considerations are more powerful, and would seem, cumulatively, conclusive:—

(*a*) There is no early or continuous tradition that the vernacular (of which we have so many examples that it was evidently *the* accepted version), is the Wycliffite version. The statement that it is so comes very late, and with no connected chain of tradition supporting it.

(*b*) The Wycliffite preface has no direct relation to the Bible on to which it is tacked, and is only found so attached to very few examples.

(*c*) In the New Testament part, where lies the temptation for an opponent of Catholic orthodoxy to give to the Latin forms new and plausible English forms supporting his thesis, no unorthodox term appears. Yet in the corresponding movement of over a century later so obvious an opportunity is naturally and necessarily taken.

(*d*) Why should the vernacular we have be quite different in construction from the Wycliffite original—as we possess it, i.e. down to Baruch? Under what necessity were they to re-write all they had done, and to re-write it in a quite different style? There are many similarities of order and words, but the very essentials of idiom and language are different (e.g. in the form of the past tense—and much else). There is no record, hint, or tradition of any such re-writing—and no kind of necessity for it. It is only imagined by moderns. There is neither proof nor likelihood of such a thing.

(*e*) Witnesses of Tudor period recall a long-existing orthodox vernacular version regularly read and widely known. Sir Thomas More knows of it, so does Caxton long before him, and Cranmer testifies that the gradual disuse of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue was recent—a thing, due, presumably, to the fear of the authorities, in the xvth century, that common reading of the Scriptures in the popular tongue would be used for the purposes of heresy.

None of these five points is decisive, and each individually can be protested. If the tradition is late, yet there is no counter tradition that the version we have is *not* Wycliffe's. If the Lollard prologue is rare, that may be because men were afraid to exhibit it, and because it was generally destroyed. The absence of unorthodox terms *may* (though

this is more difficult to accept) be due to habit and routine in the use of orthodox equivalents for the Latin (e.g. Priest for Presbyter, Church for Ecclesia, where the Greek-reading heretics of the Reformation would render "Elder" and "Congregation"). Even though the vernacular we have is in a different diction from the Wycliffite original, it *may* have been re-written. But the sixth point is very strong, and, I think, taken with all the rest, final. It is as follows :—

(*f*) The vernacular version we have is found everywhere in the most orthodox surroundings, and just where an heretical version (pursued, hunted down, forbidden by authority, destroyed when found) could never have been. It is in the royal library of a saintly king; it is treated as a thing specially cherished, magnificently produced; it is the treasured possession of great monastic houses; it is given as a splendid gift by a monarch who was remarkable for orthodoxy to one of the most conspicuous convent foundations of his time, Sion. How could a version denounced and, as far as possible, rooted out, be at the same time in such a position of splendour and respect?

We may, of course, neglect to-day the old myth that the mediæval Church, apart from its struggle with the last heresies, discountenanced the use of vernacular renderings. There had always been such renderings of essential portions of Scripture from the earliest ages, and a continual use of illustration from the Old and New Testaments. As a matter of fact, contemporary with the English vernacular version of Richard II's reign, there is a French one on the continent, and a German one, and one in Czech; for the mediæval Church relied strongly upon the Bible, and continued in that epoch, as the Church had done from her earliest origins, to cite the text perpetually, in office and sermon and private composition.

It should be obvious that a certain book, the whole Bible, was not now for the first time put into the hands of the *people:* such a MSS. was worth in our money some £200. One might as well talk of a right to practise medicine being put into the hands of the people to-day. In a sense, the Bible—like medicine to-day—was already in the hands of everybody, and entered into daily life in a fashion which we to-day can hardly conceive ; in another sense—like medicine to-day—it was accessible only to a few, because of its cost and rarity ; it could only exist in the very expensive form of manuscript. But vernacular versions everywhere existed in the West, and seem to have been thought a matter of course until the final struggle with a rising opposition to orthodoxy.

Apart from Wycliffe's activity in making a vernacular version, he sent out popular preachers (some of whom, by the way, were regularly licensed by the diocese in which they worked), but these do not seem to have had much effect. What did gradually arise from this disturbance of thought was a sect of enthusiasts called " Lollards," who based their religion on what we call to-day " revivalism "—a sort of enthusiastic personal worship diverted from tradition. We shall come across a typical member of the sect, Oldcastle, early in the following century, between thirty and forty years on.

We cannot say that the particular Lollard ferment of the late XIVth and early XVth centuries continued in England " underground," after its suppression and natural exhaustion. That idea is an illusion born of the fact (which we know, and the XVth century did not) that a later and more formidable reaction against the Church was to arise a century later abroad. In England nothing remained after the lifetime of the original and strong Lollard movement but occasional, sporadic, individual enthusiasms, very rare, which had little to do with the national life. And though it is true that discontent with the multiple and often ill-used

Church revenues was very deep—especially in London—when the first storm of the Reformation broke over Germany, yet it is also true to say that of *doctrinal* discontent there was hardly anything in the general life of Englishmen after the lifetime of Wycliffe's younger followers.

(B) Richard II

(June 21st, 1377, to some Date after the Middle of January, 1400, but before March 12th of that Year—about 22½ Years)

Accession of Richard II, June 21st, 1377.

EVERY major event in the decline of the English Middle Ages after the Black Death may be used to illustrate the profound change which had come over society.

What happened at the accession of the Black Prince's son, and what happened when he was deposed; what happened in between—all the reign—manifest a social spirit, an attitude towards the governance of the realm, which a long lifetime before would have been impossible. Not but that there had been revolt upon revolt and shock after shock against the throne in the true Middle Ages—that was in the nature of feudalism; but now feudalism had lost its principle of life, and the difficult hold which the boy Richard had on his crown, his losing it in manhood, have a different savour altogether from the generation in which his great-grandfather, Edward II, had been attacked, deposed, and murdered.

Effect of the Black Death now fully felt.

The reign of Richard II is that *second* step in the disastrous Lancastrian usurpation, which was only made possible by a profound change in the mood of men: that descent into the decay of mediæval things which so much robbed anointed kingship of its sanctity that the true line could be ousted by a regicide cousin. It is the first enduring and essential tragedy in the great story of the Plantagenets. All earlier violent evils in that line had left the sanctity of legitimate

inheritance intact. But Richard's fall was a sacrilege. The populace, of course, remained in the old tradition of reverence for the right of blood ; but the times had turned evil. In an Oxford suddenly decayed to a third of what it had been before the plague, the Lollard emotional anarchy was springing up. Conversely, the official Church had begun its long sliding down into corruption. In the towns the moral authority of corporate government was rotted with plutocracy, and the masses hated the rich few who controlled and co-öpted their brethren to the Commons. In the fields the manorial machinery was breaking down, and the old customary and natural relation of free and servile tenant to lord, still present in legal right, was no longer a social reality : it had been replaced by a permanent antagonism. It was in a society so rent and invalid that the sombre act was played out. What we have to watch in England between 1377 and 1399 is the very gallant struggle of a brave, impetuous, royal boy growing into a young manhood, beautiful, and always challenging and ready for horsemanship and arms, against a few very rich men who take advantage of the public discontent, the lack of revenue, to attempt his coercion for their advantage.

It is the cause of Richard's fall.

At first the young king succeeds in affirming his legitimate power. But all the while a too-powerful and too-silent cousin, John of Gaunt's son Henry, his own exact contemporary,[1] is watching him. At last, just as he and Richard reach the full maturity of their thirty-third year, Henry attacks by treason, overthrows, and violently grasps the throne. He has himself crowned king under the title of Henry IV, and murders the man he has betrayed. The evil succeeds and goes unpunished, to the lasting hurt of England ; and that it should be so we must put down to the passing of the chivalric temper. That, in brief, is the episode of Richard of Bordeaux, Plantagenet.

[1] Henry was born three months after Richard, at Bolingbroke, in Lincolnshire, on April 3rd, 1367.

Fear of immediate Lancastrian usurpation.

In the first days of the lad's succession there was a general expectation that John of Gaunt would seize control.

He was now a man in the fulness of his mature manhood, in his thirty-seventh year. He had possessed the vast wealth of his inheritance and of his marriage, combined, for sixteen years. He had been far the greatest man in the kingdom, and had really governed the kingdom once and again: especially in his father's last years, when he had held power by a shameless understanding with the woman Perrers. But the English people resented this threat to the rightful Plantagenet, and the accession of the child was not too difficult.

Edward was not yet dead when the leaders of London sent to the royal boy at Sheen and bade him come to the Tower. This was in that same day on which Edward died, the 21st June, 1377, and Richard was not yet eleven years old.[1] The child was crowned with magnificent ceremony, and the Duke of Lancaster took the occasion to emphasise his homage and immediately after to support the naming of a Council of Regency, in which he took no part. He retired to one of his estates, Kenilworth, and though he kept friends in the Council, for the moment he did no more. This policy he continued in the first Parliament of the reign, which met that autumn; he spoke openly on the rumours of disloyalty that had run against him, and made a public profession of adherence to the throne.

It is delayed.

This first Council and Parliament was remarkable for a point in procedure which was that two great merchants of London were empowered at the demand of the Commons to receive the money of a special tax just granted for the prosecution of the war with France, and to watch its expenditure upon the object for which it had been given.

No real power in Commons during Middle Ages.

It is a very false reading of history to mark stage by stage a supposed advance in the powers of the House of

[1] He was born at Bordeaux on January 6th, 1367: the second son of the Black Prince. His elder brother, Edward, had died in 1370.

Commons. From its crystallisation into a permanent institution during Edward III's reign to the beginning of aristocratic control over the declining monarchy under Elizabeth, the House of Commons never had power. Its character developed; points in its routine of action appeared successively—such a process is inevitable to the story of any organism. But in essential character the Commons remain till the Reformation a body for discussing and agreeing to special, abnormal, though frequent, other than the regular national revenue, a body for presenting grievances or drafting proposals, and a body whose presence was rather doubtfully required side by side with the peers for the full ratification of any really important new law.

More than that it was not. But even this new function in the third estate is proof of the decay of feudalism. The House of Commons meant the landed gentry (with a sprinkling of the greater gentry also, the near relatives of the magnates) and the more important of the merchant class in the towns. So long as feudalism was a living thing, the hierarchy of society made the Tenants in Chief stand for all that depended upon them in a broadening set of links, which came down at last to the villein or serf upon the land. And the towns had their lords, as the country village had—usually the king. But with the passing of the feudal idea, any man of sufficient substance and of free birth tended to count as a separate unit. As such men were far too numerous to be consulted singly (though the richer of them were also consulted singly, and especially for financial purposes), the representative institution came to stand for the fiscal power of squire and merchant: their ability to pay taxes and the amount they could supply. Through that main function it came to stand also on rare occasions as a symbol of the general opinion of all wealth below the great fortunes of the magnates. But the making of laws, the decision of policy—all that which, since the destruction of popular monarchy in England remained till yesterday in the hands of the gentry,

England till the Reformation governed by King and Council. Since then by the gentry.

was, throughout all the time of which we are here speaking, normally reserved to the king, acting normally but not by any means always, with the advice of his Council ; and this was, by right, of his own choosing. On chief occasions he conferred with and took the sense of the peers, that is, the bishops and mitred abbots of the realm, and such great lay barons—some fifty in number, whom he chose, or whom it was customary to summon.

Yet the full Parliament, king consulting with peers, and Commons attending apart, was an institution which men desired to preserve and strengthen. A yearly Parliament was from time to time a floating ideal, and it would not have been even that but for a certain vague representative quality about it which was never forgotten.

Three futile campaigns in France, 1378-1380.

In the year after Richard's accession there was a continuation of the now disastrous war with France in the field of Brittany, led by John of Gaunt, and without result. Its futility filled the fighting season, and, a second expedition having been sent out and destroyed in a storm at sea, in the year following, 1379, a third attempt was made under Buckingham, John of Gaunt's brother, in 1380, marching from Calais right across the north of France ; again without result. The only real interest of these expensive failures to English history is that, coming on the top of an increasing pressure for money, the legacy of the earlier defeats, they were the causes of the great tax which in its turn led to the Peasants' Revolt.

The situation was distantly comparable to that which we saw, in the last volume, leading to the crisis under John. The taxable area had shrunk enormously through the losses in France, yet the expense of the war had risen.

It was yet another sign of how the feudal concept of society was disappearing that the levy for meeting the expenses of the Breton war (during and after the event) took the form of a personal tax : a poll tax. It was on the 5th November, 1380, just after the last expedition to Brittany

had failed, and while Buckingham was passing the winter there inactive, awaiting the better season to return, that the crisis came. Already, just before Edward III's death, the principle of a personal tax had already been adopted. It was at the rate of 4d. a head, and insufficient. The object now—1379—was to raise £50,000. There was an attempt at rating every family in the country, and even single men and women as well; and the general popular basis was that of 4d. upon the great mass of the people, with a rising scale which reached two-thirds of a pound with the greater merchants, from a pound upwards with what had been the feudal class, including the smaller territorial gentry and the greatest merchants, but in no case exceeding the assessment of John of Gaunt and his brother, which was still under £7. It is curious to note how much the idea of social rank came into all this. The scale was a mixture of assessment by income and assessment by position, and fell very much more heavily upon the mass of the populace than upon their superiors. It was very indifferently gathered, and reluctantly paid, and brought in less than half what had been expected. Such a failure brought the crisis to which I have alluded. On that 5th of November, 1380, the Chancellor told the Committee of Lords and Commoners mixed, who had been appointed to survey expenditure, that £160,000 must be found—and the sum was declared intolerable. At last £100,000 was agreed on, and upon December 6th, after a month's discussion, the Commons granted a second poll tax, which was designed to produce the whole sum in a somewhat novel fashion.

The Poll Taxes, 1377-1379-1380.

The great Poll Tax of 1380.

We must watch the experiment very carefully, because a misunderstanding, whether of its nature or of its arithmetic, may mislead us on the most important historical points: such, for instance, as that of the number of the population, with which I propose to deal at some length.

The theory was that every individual in England over fifteen should pay 1s. The original words are: "De chescune

laie persone du Roialme qui sunt passez l'age de xv ans." [1] Each village or town was to furnish as many shillings as it had adults—the rich helping the poor, but the very poorest couple paying at least 4d., and the average man even in a poor place, 1s.

First let us appreciate what that meant in the social value of money, comparing that time with this. The working man in regular employment to-day in our towns must get, if he has a family, something like £2 10s. a week, if he is not to be dependent upon extra help in some form; and on that sum a man and his wife and three or four children are hard pressed. In the country the very lowest wage is less, but the agricultural labourer is the exception: there are occasional supplements to his low income, and he has an artificially low rent. It is fair to say that with the great bulk of our population about £130 a year of our modern money is the standard of a labouring family, and from £200 a year upwards the payment of a trained artisan.

Real meaning of the tax at that time.

Now, in the latter half of the xvth century, when a scale was drawn up for what were regarded as good and sufficient wages (a sort of maximum beyond which the man who depended on wages was not to go), the craftsman, such as a carpenter, got 2d. a day, and the lowest labourer 1½d. Taking out the festival and other days when money was not earned, you may multiply that sum by anything between 250 and 275, and say that the sufficiently paid smaller craftsman required something more than £2 and less than £2 5s. a year to keep himself and his family, and the poorer common labourers more than 30s. and less than 35s.

We have here, then, a wage payment in money for a *year* in the late xivth century, *less* than the same for a *week* in 1927. This is a vastly greater difference than the

[1] The official French continues, though by this time most of the private conversation of the lower gentry was in the New English. The king and the court and the higher gentry still spoke French, and a very large belt of educated men was still bilingual.

mere purchasing value of gold in the two epochs would suggest. It is a multiple of at least 60. The multiple for the mere purchasing power of gold is more than 35 but less than 40.[1] Taking the time as a whole their shilling was not our £2, but it was not far short of it. Yet the multiple in wages is a multiple of at least 60. This is not accounted for by what we should call the lower standard of living, but rather by a different way of living. Meat and ale were usually plentiful and cheap: white bread much dearer in proportion than it is to-day; but rye bread as cheap (nearly) as our wheaten bread; iron in all forms is very much dearer; but clothing a much smaller expense (although wool was much dearer) because a very simple form of garment was the only thing demanded, and it was made to serve for a very much longer time.[2] Then, again, the bulk of the population lived under their own roofs, for which they paid dues in the villages, but only a small minority what we call to-day "house-rent," and that not competitive. What has happened in between has been the growth of the number of categories of expenditure; the number of things on which the modern man can or must spend money: his situation being such that, however poor, unless he fulfils a larger number of functions than his fathers were required to fulfil, he cannot carry on. At any rate, £100,000 demanded from a population of less than a million

Social value of the sum demanded.

[1] I am not taking the official index number, which is drawn up with a political object, but the real cost of a working man's living, counting in this what he would have to find if he paid a competitive, unsubsidised rent.

[2] The reader may be interested to test the scale by the simple method of seeing what *one shilling* would buy in 1381:—

One shilling in 1381 would buy half a sack of wheat.
" " " a whole sack of rye or beans or oats.
" " " one-eighth of a cow.
" " " six to eight hens.
" " " an ewe.
" " " one-third of a pig.
" " " 16 lb. of butter.
" " " 250 eggs.
" " " *A week's average skilled craft labour, such as a smith's or carpenter's.*

—probably only three-quarters of a million—families (the effect of the plague must be allowed for) meant the equivalent of a year's livelihood for some 50,000 working families, or, say, from one-eighteenth to one-fifteenth of the population. Measured in terms of human life, this special extra tax of £100,000 meant to the England of young Richard II in mere money about what 40 millions means to-day ; but the social meaning of such a sum was immensely larger ; for to-day there is indefinitely more surplus wealth in the hands of the richer classes. The raising of £100,000 pounds by direct taxation, involving the whole people, represented something more like our modern rates of very heavy taxation, and that falling *directly* and at one blow on all those who worked with their hands as well as on the well-to-do.

Now it should be self-evident to us as we read, and it was self-evident to the Commons of the day, that the poor people of England could not pay this rate of 1s. for each adult individual. It would be like asking each adult individual to-day to pay £4 on demand. For 1s. was the weekly wage of a sufficiently paid artisan ; the weekly wage we are paying to-day for the same livelihood is about £4.

The rate of assessment.

What was done we have seen : the sum of 1s. a head was to be treated as an average, and the individual incidence should be distributed by local assessors, so that the rich paid more than the average and the poor less. No individual, however, was to produce less than 4d., and that was heavy enough in all conscience : half a week's wages. In point of fact, we have only to look at the taxing lists to see what really happened. Nothing like the total number of individuals in England was approached.

It is clear that the local collector would go to a village and say, " I must get so much out of this village." He would then make his enquiries, and see the maximum which he could possibly manage to extort. Having done this, he sat down to make a list of the people, arbitrarily fixing to name after name the conventional sum of 1s. ; with higher sums

from the few wealthy, and down to a groat—4d.—for the poorest.

Particular example : Brockley.

The matter of population is so important to a true reading of the English Middle Ages, and it is commonly so wrongly put, that I must beg to detain the reader with a detailed example.

Here is an analysis of the village of Brockley: You have a knight and his wife, that is, the local gentleman and lady ; they are assessed at 6s., or, as we should put it in social value to-day, from £10 to £12—the two between them pay no more. There are five substantial farmers in the village, each of whom is married ; they pay from what to-day we should call £8 or £9 (note that the large farmer counts nearly as much as the squire) to what we should call £4 or £5 to-day. The others pay about £3 10s., that is, for the whole household ; but the only people reckoned as taxpayers are the farmer and his wife. It would be ridiculous to imagine that in all these households there were no sons or daughters over fourteen ; but there is no mention of any, nor do they pay taxes.

Then come the artisans of the village community. They are nine in number : smiths, carpenters, one weaver, and a carrier. Here, again, you have only the man and his wife in each case : no widower, no widow, no young people, and they pay what we should call to-day from £2 to £3 of our money, much as the smaller farmers do.

Then you get four people put down as "Laboratores," which does not, of course, mean our modern word labourers, but rather people who added to the earnings of their little plots by working freely at a wage for other people in extra time. Note there are only four in the whole parish. All these four again are married, and are counted with their wives. It is the household that pays, and they pay heavily for such poor folk : 35s. to £2 in our money.

Lastly come four men with their wives under the title "servientes," which, of course, has nothing to do with our

modern word "servant," but is roughly used to mean people whose whole time is occupied at a wage; for instance, we have a shepherd, John Alexander, and two important employees of either the knight or some big farmer, who pay £2 each.

Now, analysing this list, we find for all the males of the village who pay a tax the number forty-three.

Of those forty-three only five pay the minimum tax of 4d., or, as we should say in our money, some 16s. We find the further remarkable fact that of the forty-three, thirty-seven are married and have a wife alive; only *six* males appear unmarried or widowers and over fifteen! We further find (and this is really worth remarking) only two unmarried women over fifteen in the whole list! Lastly—and I think most significant of all—we find only one repetition of names: no other sons, daughters, or even brothers over fifteen. In other words, we find no mention of the young people at all, nor even of a second generation living in the household and already married—with this one exception. Remember that surnames were now in full use, and that all these people have a surname. You have Simon Smith, John Bowle, John Wright, and all the rest of them.

The one exception to the repetition of names is in the case of the Shortnecks. John Shortneck is a substantial farmer who pays (in our money) £6, and you do get a Richard Shortneck, married, who, with his wife, pays about £2, and another Shortneck, an employee of the farmer, who pays 16s. With these exceptions, the mention of one daughter put down as doing work on a farm, and of one son, there is no repetition of surnames.

Now it is perfectly clear what such a list—and it is a typical case out of hundreds—must mean and can only mean. What was really taxed was not the individual adult, but the household. It is not likely that a large parish was tilled and all its crafts worked by forty-three males over fifteen and their wives. It is still less credible that pretty well all

these males over fifteen would be married—not widowers nor bachelor boys. It is utterly incredible that there should be in the parish only two unmarried girls of over fifteen years, and it is frankly impossible that with close on forty married men and their wives paying taxes there should appear only three young people unmarried in the whole list—if, indeed, they were young people at all. Finally, it is equally impossible that you should not have had in such a community, if all had been assessed to the tax, many of the same name, the grandfather and the son and the grandchildren. It is, I think, clear that the tax, though in theory rigorously personal, was at once interpreted in terms of mediæval morals and society, and applied to *families*, and that even so the taxing lists (of which the highest [1] gives us under 1,400,000 over fifteen for all England, except Chester and Durham) do not give much more than *selected* heads of households and their wives, with very few additional items.

Thus, apart from its interest as a cause of the great revolt, the Poll Tax of 1380 has an academic interest as the basis of many modern efforts to calculate from its returns the population of England at that date.

Erroneous calculation of population based on the taxing lists.

We know, from the same general evidence as served us in showing the insufficiency of Domesday as a census, what the normal population of England was, with its known millions acres of ploughed land, to wit, 5 or 6 millions. We know that the Black Death had suddenly and heavily lowered that total to less than 4 millions, or even near 3. We must presume that in the intervening forty years there had been some recovery, in spite of recurrence of plague ; but presumably not a complete one, as many young children had died in the Black Death and, with them, the potential parenthood of the next thirty to forty years. We might

[1] 1377 gives 1,355,201 lay-folk over 14 ; 1380-1 gives 896,451 lay-folk over 15. Is it not evident that a census differing by a *third* in three years is not a census at all ?

guess, therefore, at the population in 1381 as nearly 4 millions.

When we turn to the taxing lists of 1381, a very large proportion of which remain to us, we find, as I have shown, that they are useless for our purpose. They are absurdly incomplete; or, rather, they make no pretence to completness, and are nothing more than a sort of rough compromise between what was ordered (in a society without census or police) and what could be, or would be, actually paid: 1377 gave rather more than 1⅓ millions over fourteen. Allowing for some slight increase (the country was still recovering), and setting that against the absence of the fourteen-year-olds, 1381 should have given, on the same basis as 1377, about the same numbers, 1⅓ millions. As a fact, we have seen that far *less* names—about three-quarters—were returned than in 1377, and that alone is proof of the haphazard and conventional way in which both lists were drawn up: 1377 was a demand for 4d.; 1381 was a demand for 1s. The people grumblingly managed a certain amount of 4d.'s, but not, of course, anything like the full quota. When it came to 1s. they insisted on a much smaller amount of names going in, and were successful. For though extra pressure was brought in later to extort this very insecure tax, it had no full effect.

The most cursory examination of the lists is enough to show how insufficient were the official returns.

They bristle with dozens of anomalies. The percentages of married, of the sexes, of the classes—which would in anything like a census show regular averages -vary enormously from place to place; and very nearly all are set down as paying the regulation shilling. You have occasionally lists of men without wives (as in Hythingham), and often wives without husbands. Titled and wealthy householders with half a dozen men serving them—and not a wench about the place; and perpetually—indeed, in nearly every list—the solemn recurrence of "Robertus Hunt et Uxor ejus," "Petrus Attewell

et Margeria Uxor ejus," by the score and the fifty, with not a child among them ![1]

There is then nothing to make out of the Poll Tax lists save the certitude that England had very much more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions population (which is what $1\frac{1}{3}$ millions over 15 would mean). *How* much more the lists do not help us to discover; but if we say some 4 millions as the population England had in 1381 we are not far off the mark. Before the Black Death it had had far more.

The Poll Tax the cause of the Rebellion, A.D. 1381.

Once we are clear upon the point that the theoretical scheme of the shilling Poll Tax of 1380-81 was in practice intolerable, what follows is not difficult to apprehend. The East and South-east of England rose. We must remember that the serf was not, of old, taxed by the State; it was not in his tradition. When feudalism was alive he was taxed in labour and dues for his lord, and his lord could "tallage" him at will, i.e. come down on him arbitrarily for small sums. Feudalism was now dying. The English peasant, still technically unfree, was now almost ceasing to be a serf: there were legal rights over him, but they were becoming an anachronism; that was why he could now be taxed by the State. But he was a man of tenacious social tradition, and these novel demands made on him by the *State* were, in his eyes, an injustice. He understood the capital levy. All wars till modern times were paid for by capital levies. But such levies were meant for the well-to-do and privileged, whom Parliament represented and spoke for. They had no right (he thought) to come down on *him*, who had only the capital of his few chattels and of the instruments of his trade, and who had no truck with Parliament. It was even a shock to him. One might compare it to an attempt to-day

[1] Thus, quoting at random, 16 free married couples in one village. *No* children over 15! Fifty-five unfree and only 5 children in all over 15. Forty-eight free married couples, only 7 free people unmarried, and only 1 of these a woman. Thirty-five married and only 3 unmarried. Nine artisan families in one Suffolk village—and no children at all, etc., etc.

at conscription for a new distant and unpopular war on an even more rigorous system than the last. There had already been experience of one poll tax, grudgingly and only partially paid. This new and *trebly* larger one was not to be borne; and of course—apart from all this moral feeling—the major factor remained that the sum demanded was altogether impossible. You cannot get the whole week's wages of a well-employed artisan on demand, in cash ($\frac{2}{3}$rds at one stroke, and the last $\frac{1}{3}$rd by Whitsuntide at the latest), out of every individual over fifteen in any community on the economic scale of late XIVth century England.

The Peasants' Revolt begins, May 30th, 1381.

The French wars dragging on, and dragging on indefinitely, had made the fiscal burden what it was in all France and England. The violent protest was not confined to England, but apart from this, the levelling effect of a great disaster —the plague—and its working through the previous half century was moving men. The last date for payment of the tax was, as we have seen, Whitsunday, June 2nd. The rising began in Essex, at Brentwood, where, in the court of the Tax Commissioner, the men of Fobbings, on May 30th, refused to meet the demand. When the lawyers were set to do the ferret-work against them, they murdered sundry of these and raised the country.

They were—by one account—led by a demagogic priest, who had been given the nickname of Jack Straw. The peasantry of Kent rose from two to three days later. (The start of the sedition is ascribed by legend to an assault on a girl in Dartford by one of the collectors. The collector was murdered.) All the west of the county was afoot in the same month of June; the town of Gravesend, getting help from Essex, rose in its turn. It is characteristic that the rising in one place was due to a man claiming a well-to-do townsman as his serf, and bargaining for his enfranchisement at an enormous price.

Here we must note that the rising, once it took on strength, included many elements. The masses in the towns

had a violent grievance against the little cliques of wealthy burgesses who held power—hence the London mob The tenants of the great abbeys—notably St. Albans and Bury—had a different but equally violent grievance against clerical dues and rents of endowment, exacted with all the conservatism of the Church, and excluding rights of local government. Hatreds of all kinds were abroad: against foreigners, between factions even of the well-to-do. For a few of the gentry joined the insurgents, and there were aldermen of London found ready to help the rebellion and admit it into the city.

One element in the situation has been exaggerated through a confusion between mediæval and modern conditions: the regulation of wages. After the Black Death the sudden dearth of labour led to extravagant demands by those who worked at a wage. Hence, in France and England especially, regulations beginning with a royal edict in 1349, a Statute of Labourers in 1351, and the policy repeated for a lifetime of regulating wages and forbidding the offering or taking of more than the statutory amount. It was a policy at once necessary and, on the whole, successful, as the world, after an interval of pure competitive anarchy, is beginning to discover. It was part of the morals of the day, and was *not* a main cause of the rebellion, because (1) it did not affect the mass of the population in those days; (2) it was on a principle which all at heart accepted. The rebellion arose not from the fixing of wages for labourers—a minority—but from over-taxation of what had become a free peasantry.

By the time that the Kentish men were marching on London contemporaries estimated them at 100,000 men.[1]

The strong egalitarian feeling behind the revolt.

They had in full the doctrine which is never lost among mankind, which is perpetually attempting to realise itself and as perpetually failing: the doctrine that men are equal,

[1] Such general estimates are, of course, not statistics, but it is one more out of scores of pieces of converging evidence supporting the conclusion of a large population in England during the Middle Ages.

that their inequality is an artificial evil, that some drastic surgical act may do away with it, and that such an act should be performed at once.

The revolt spread with astonishing rapidity from north of Lincoln to the Channel. As is always the case with great popular movements, there was a strange mixture of policy. They destroyed the manorial records of old servitude ; they killed the lawyers with a special ferocity—that logically followed from their principles. But they also were enthusiastic for the boy king, and oddly opposed—one large body at least—to the Duke of Lancaster, whose secret ambition was undoubtedly bad for England as a European State, but could not directly affect them or their claims. The Government was taken completely by surprise. The Black Prince's widow, the king's mother, on her way back from pilgrimage to Canterbury, rescued herself by her address and courtesy from the mob into the midst of which she fell.

That was on June 11th. Later she and the king and her little son ; the Archbishop of Canterbury ; Sudbury, who was Chancellor, that is, chief minister and responsible for general policy ; Hales, the Treasurer and minister directly responsible for the collection of the tax ; and a company of more than 100 altogether, gathered in the Tower. John of Gaunt was not there. The boy was taken down next day, June 12th, on the barge by the river to receive the petition of the great rebel horde at Rotherhithe or Greenwich, but his guardians—especially the Archbishop—were terrified by the reception that awaited them, and brought him back on the tide. It was an error, for a popular gathering can always be moved by kingship, and the insurgents were maddened at seeing Richard taken back. The rebels went on to Southwark, sacked the Archbishop's Palace at Lambeth. Next day, June 13th, the alderman responsible for the bridge lowered it and they poured into London. The mob of London rose to join them, the rich houses were looted, particularly the Savoy. Lancaster's magnificent

The rioting in London.

palace was sacked and destroyed, its fine great hall blown up with gunpowder.[1] In the course of the day there seems to have been an attempt at discipline amongst them and the punishment of despoilers, but the accounts are contradictory. They showed a strong antipathy to foreigners, particularly to the Flemings, whom they murdered. It is interesting as an example of the separate nationalism that was already beginning to affect Europe in the failure of the Middle Ages, and which sprang from the new vernacular literature, the division in the Papacy, and the growing corruption of Europe's universal Church : her chief bond.

The little royal party cooped up in the Tower sat in council all night. They had not the force to act in arms against this boiling mass outside. So what was done was a trick, for which the brave lad of fourteen who wore the crown must not be blamed, and the use of which its authors excused to their own consciences on the plea of constraint.

The rebels are defeated by a trick, June 14th, A.D. 1381.

The rebels hated the politicians but loved their king. They were told that the king would accept their demands if they would retire to Mile End. The boy made his Confession early in the morning of Friday, June 14th, and then rode out unarmed with a few equally unarmed companions about him, a perilous passage through a shouting mob, and found the enormous gathering at Mile End—again contemporaries give us estimates, saying that it was 60,000—presenting simple demands, the elimination of all rights to forced labour, that is, of the remains of villainage ; rented land under the plough to be at 4d., or, as we should say, about 16s. an acre ; [2] and they wanted to be free—poor people to buy and sell in all the fairs and markets without paying toll ; to have manorial courts abolished. A charter was properly drawn

[1] " Trois barrels de poudre pour guns," a fine specimen of the mixed double language of the time !

[2] The demand of revolutionaries as of nations struggling for freedom is often surprisingly modest at first. No more than a demand to have things a little easier than they are accustomed to. A common rent was 6d.—our " pound an acre." They were willing to pay $\frac{4}{5}$ths of that.

up, granting these requests; copies were delivered to the leaders, sealed—by that piece of treachery the rebellion was destroyed, for those who had advised the manœuvre and used the courage of the boy-king had no intention of keeping their word.

Wat Tyler killed.

Wat Tyler, the Kentish leader, and Jack Straw, the Essex leader, led a small party against the Tower, seized and murdered the Archbishop, Simon of Sudbury. He had been a man pious, regular, a little weak, especially in his handling of the Lollards; but he knew his own defects, and would have abandoned a power he wielded too slackly. He had said Mass that morning in the Tower, and all day long awaited death. He died well. They ran at him calling him "Traitor," for it was he as Chancellor who was responsible in their eyes for the evils they had suffered, and for the misleading of their king. He answered loudly that he was their archbishop and no traitor, but they beat him and put him to death; with him Hales, the Treasurer, who had directly ordered the collection of the tax; and perhaps three others. They frightened the king's mother, who fainted, but did her no further harm. The whole thing was blazingly rapid. It had covered less than four days since the arrival of the great armed mob at the Thames from the South. We are only at the evening of Friday, the 14th June.

The courage of the king saves the situation, Saturday, June 15th, 1381.

Next morning, Saturday, the 15th, that fine young king, Richard, rode out again with quite a small company, but this time some of them secretly armed with mail below their cloth. He found the last remnants of the insurrection, some 20,000 men, in the great open space of Smithfield. Wat Tyler there rode up to him, and after a parley seized (some say) the king's bridle; there was a scuffle, and Tyler was wounded by Walworth, the Lord Mayor, and put to death by the rest. His followers drew their bows upon the king, who at once showed himself Plantagenet: he cried in his treble: "I will be your leader!" led them out to Clerkenwell field, farm land outside the town to the north. There a

whole thousand of armed mounted men were ready to receive the boy ; he refused them leave to attack the rebels about him, whom he sent home ; but strict discipline was re-established in the city of London, where no man not domiciled therein might pass that night save at the risk of arrest and immediate execution.

By the end of the month the gentry had begun to rally, and were coming in armed and mounted into London. On the 2nd July the end of the comedy was played, and the little king, with 40,000 of the gentry and their retainers at his back, was made to break his word. The pledge broken.

The organised armed force of the noble class rode forth, trampling down the poor remnants of that sudden fire, and the thing was at an end ; but not until fierce vengeance had been taken.

Meanwhile, Norfolk had passed through a popular insurrection better led, better organised, and more successful than that further south. For a moment it held the county—or at least much round the chief town—under a government of its own. But the Bishop of Norwich, a Despenser, and therefore a man of high lineage and fighting temper, crushed it. He had been absent westward on a visitation. He came back eastward towards his cathedral city, reached Peterborough on the 16th of June, the day after the rebels had dispersed at London, rallied the gentry (some of whom, however, were with the insurgents), forced Cambridge, and was at the gates of Norwich by the 24th. The rebels under their able leader Litster, fell back on North Walsham, there fought a regular pitched battle behind entrenchments, lost it, and collapsed.

The Parliament met in the late autumn a week after All Souls. It was asked by the Government to consider the wisdom of abolishing what remained of mere serfdom altogether ; but the Commons, that is, the mass of the rich, gentry, and merchants, were not wise enough to do that : though the force of things had already nearly done it for

them. The Lords and Commons together—that is, the bishops and abbots, the great and medium landowners, and town magnates—repealed the charters by which the revolutionaries had been tricked.

The Peasants' Revolt was not coterminous with the nation by any means. Its furthest effort northward was half-way up the coast of Yorkshire, and, westward, Winchester: the only districts of *general* rising were Essex (with London), Kent, and Norfolk.

I have given so long a space to this one incident in so short a book because of its significance rather than its vividness. The English people have never rebelled since the end of the Reformation: the English people of the Middle Ages made this fierce effort; they were capable of similar movements not wholly national, but widespread, so long as the old religious philosophy in which they had been trained subsisted. Their last insurrection was in defence of that religious philosophy—the great northern rising against the rule of the Cecils. It was defeated, and from that day onward no considerable section of the labouring English people have moved against their rulers.

These scenes closed with an attempt of the merchants and gentry, the Commons, to bargain in Parliament for the meeting of their petitions before granting an extra supply, an attempt not made for the first time, but an attempt that failed. A general pardon was issued (with the exception of nearly 300 particular names), and that was the end.

Wycliffe's last days of condemnation and recantation.

It was also the moment when Wycliffe was to die. The new Archbishop Courtenay had called a Synod (May, 1382) to condemn his doctrines, and the earthquake which shook London while that synod sat was naturally proclaimed by the learned man to be a sign from Heaven. He was not wholly unsuccessful in this last passage of his life. He protested sincerely against the weight of taxation, saying simply that no more levies should be made. He protested (less sincerely) against the so-called "Crusade," which the Pope at

Rome had urged the English to help in Flanders against the King of France, protector of the rival Pope at Avignon. Wycliffe only objected in his *rôle* of anti-papalist; but his attitude was popular, for the Flanders "Crusade" was a costly failure: over in 1383. The attempt to suppress his preachers by the action of the bishops was checked by the House of Commons itself. It is worth noting that Parliament, in spite of its having now contained the three estates for more than a century, was still so uncertain in form that the Act giving the bishops the right so to prosecute Wycliffe's popular preachers had the force of law without the Commons having assented to it. Yet the victory was with the Church. He wrote a Confession of Orthodoxy [1] in the presence of the archbishop and six suffragans. He was no longer troubled; he went back home to Lutterworth, and there, on the 31st December, 1384, died—hearing Mass.

Wycliffe dies, Dec. 31st, 1384.

He who would correct the official legend on Wycliffe and understand that violent, confused, aggrieved, industrious character of Wycliffe, will do well to read with care the document which his contemporaries called his recantation —for it was taken as such. It deals with the Eucharist, on the mystery of which Wycliffe had nothing original to say. He merely took up, in shifting fashion, the age-long dialectics of the older controversies. Yet read the document. Its mass of verbiage, its almost incomprehensible phrases on the Real Presence, its caution, its pride in the thinnest webs of a decadent scholasticism, are the very reflection of the man. Egotism was his bane, energy his virtue. To that energy was due the considerable influence of the Lollards in England, especially among the squires, who were jealous of Church wealth. It was an influence which

[1] It was accepted by the Church, and is singularly confused, even for that very changeable brain. It rather apologises for his errors than abandons them. The phrase on the Eucharist is almost incomprehensible. But no two readers could agree on what the man's views on the Eucharist were at any one moment, and whatever they were he kept on changing them.

endured nearly forty years, to the end of the great papal schism, that spiritual civil war in the Church which had made Lollardy possible.

Richard had profited exceedingly by his courage and initiative in the moment of the London riots. He had suffered —as popular king—by the shameless betrayal of the popular charters. It was the work of his elders, but it smirched him. He was eager to be out of such a coil, and to reign indeed. But he was not of age to bear arms.

Just after he had passed his fifteenth birthday, in January, 1382, he was wedded, in one of those premature marriages which were a necessary rule with mediæval monarchy, to a girl of exactly his own age, the Princess Anne of Bohemia, sister to Wenceslas, emperor elect. She grew up to be the most beloved Queen of England, whose memory still faintly lingers in popular phrases; still more did she become the beloved of her husband. Their ephemeral twelve years of intense happiness in the midst of treason all around them is one of the great love stories of the Middle Ages. But the marriage had a doom attached to it, as have most great loves. Anne could bear no children. It was vital to that young king that the intrigues which his long minority had bred should be weakened by the birth of an heir. None came; and it was the conviction that no heir could be born (a conviction that became a certitude as the pair passed their twentieth year) that gave heart to the plotters.

It is with 1383 that Richard made his first effort—being then in his seventeenth year—to assume his rightful place and to rule his realm.

Richard of age.

He was now of age to bear arms. He had all the Plantagenet insistence upon rights; but the long years before he could effectually rule and destroy faction, the disturbances of which filled those years, made it difficult for him to accomplish his design. For more than six years—that is, as he grew up into early manhood—he was struggling without success to be king indeed.

That phase lasts, with various fortunes, till the spring of 1389. From that date he is wisely and gradually eliminating opposition for eight years. He seized full power at last with boldness and success in 1397. He held it for two years, till 1399; then came the sudden stroke of ill-fortune and treason which deposed him, murdered him, and permitted the final Lancastrian usurpation.

The phases before that revolution, the first six years of struggle for power, the ten years of true kingly power, I next describe.

Michael de la Pole.

We first must grasp the character of a most remarkable man, Michael de la Pole. He very nearly set up the Plantagenet kingship again; he very nearly succeeded in so strengthening the throne that the Lancastrian usurpation would have failed to mature. He was a statesman, yet upright and not grasping. He had a clear object in view that did not tend to his own advancement, but was the restoration of strong central rule under his legitimate king, whose young eagerness and courage recalled to that trained administrator the manhood of Edward III before his senility: the military fame of the Black Prince.

Michael de la Pole was, in 1383, some fifty years of age. He had been given his barony as far back as 1366. His whole life had been spent in the loyal and active service of the State. His father, a very wealthy merchant knight of the Humber, had been entrusted with much governmental work as Baron of the Exchequer, and in his native county of Yorkshire had advanced monies to the Crown. His grandfather, Sir Richard de la Pole—in English, "Atte Poole"—of similar jurisdiction, had been the same. His great-grandfather, the original De la Pole, the founder of the family under Edward I, was already knighted and the chief figure in the port of Hull. In the way of Michael de la Pole's middle-class Englishry, it is something to know that the name of the ancestress at Hull, the founder's wife, was Rottenherring.

Michael, then, the great-grandson, is now a chief man in the heart of affairs, among the richest in England and with a very solid tradition. He had been nominated, together with another baron, Arundel (the Fitzalan of Arundel Castle), to the guardianship of Richard during his minority. But in March, 1383, Richard had already assumed sufficient authority to get free from Arundel and to have De la Pole named Chancellor.

Michael de la Pole, with his long experience and integrity, had a clear policy: to wind up the lingering, ruinous, and unsuccessful war with France, to strengthen central government at home, to have peace within and without. That did not suit the book of the magnates, who were used to the freedom and spoils of a long minority. Arundel, who was sore at the success of De la Pole; his brother, Thomas Arundel, Bishop of Ely; the hugely wealthy Lancastrian family and their crowd of hangers-on; Lancaster's brother, Gloucester (another of the king's uncles); and all the crowd of the ambitious, the expectant, the intriguers.

We enter here a short tumult in which nothing can be made out if we attempt to define regular parties. Men chopped and changed, as they always will, in such a whirlpool, with its daily varying opportunities for personal advantage. But the shape of the eddy is clear enough if we bear in mind throughout these four points:—

1. The young king approaching his twentieth year, with his adored wife at his side (herself idolised by the populace), is the legitimate government. He and none other. He has round him well-chosen and tried friends: the chief of them De la Pole, his elderly and very highly trained director. Also young De Vere, Earl of Oxford, and his own contemporary; Bramber, his tutor, a thoroughly loyal man; and sundry others. Opposition to the king represents no cause. It is no more than the action of a few individual magnates, hoping for private gain, but, like all such, quarrelling among themselves. And that habit of treasonable faction arises from the long minority of the king.

2. The nation has been profoundly disturbed by a nearly successful rising of the masses (who have nothing to do, remember, with what was then called *parliament*) against the rich : a rising which respected the king and looked to him to help the poor. It is sore with memories of great victories abroad, turned to defeats long before the king's accession, and is therefore easily divided into parties or aroused to protests.

3. The small class of direct taxpayers, the well-to-do squires and merchants, have an organ in the Commons. They (*a*) are very loath to give up the war, but also (*b*) to pay for it by extra taxation. They have no idea of taking part in the government of the country, but they can obstruct and protest and refuse taxation *extra to* the regular revenue ; with the regular revenue they have nothing to do. They can always be chosen by a party in power, which orders the sheriffs in the counties and the town authorities to send up its nominees. They meet the Lords and the Crown in Parliament for quite short periods, and are summoned at no regular intervals, only when the Government must have money beyond the regular revenue of the Crown. To think of the House of Commons in the Middle Ages as having a likeness to the modern institution of the same name, *or as gradually approaching that modern institution*, is to misunderstand every term used.

4. Through the welter of changing opposition to the king, reconciliations, and new enmities, runs one fixed thread : the ambition of Richard's uncle, John of Gaunt, and later of his son Henry (at first Earl of Derby, then of Hereford, then, on his father's death, Duke of Lancaster), to replace the king. This ambition is deflected by foreign adventure. It is cowed for a time by the king's vigour, but it awaits a final triumph. It is far more powerful than any other factor through its great wealth and the large recruiting ground it has in its feudal holdings.

One may look on the time as on a stage where stand three

young figures—King Richard, Queen Anne, Henry of Lancaster—all born within six months one of the other; and Henry watching his opportunity for destroying the other two. He now works openly with Richard, now almost as openly against him, according as each attitude may advance him towards his goal: but that goal—that he should supplant Richard—he keeps steadily before him, and if the king fails to destroy his cousin, that cousin will destroy him.

New Lancastrian peril in 1384.

Here, at the very beginning of Richard II's active years, the very strong suspicion that John of Gaunt would try to seize the crown was heard again. During a parliament held at Salisbury at the end of spring, 1384, a detailed document describing such a conspiracy was put into the king's hands by a monk; and that monk was secretly tortured by a gang including Lancastrians and the king's half-brother, Holand.[1] The monk died of it. The accusation remained unproved, but did not make Lancaster's case any better. Lord Zouch was said to be the author of the memorial. He denied it, but not every one was sure that his denial was sincere. Richard certainly believed the accusation to be true, and I think, on the whole, the verdict of history will agree with him, though the matter is not certain. There was no sign of an heir; this lowering threat of Lancastrian treason still hung over the throne, and we shall understand that reign very ill if we do not remember that Richard's actions were all undertaken with such a peril ever present to his eyes.

What happened in the next year, 1385, could only confirm him in that idea. This same Holand, who had murdered the monk, committed another murder upon the son of one of Richard's close friends, Lord Stafford. This was at York, in July, and in the midst of the young king's northern march against Scotland with a very large army.[2]

[1] Richard II's mother married the Black Prince as a widow. Her first husband had been Thomas Holand, Earl of Kent.

[2] The size of that force is worth noting in connection with our discussion of population in that day. It was 80,000 men. Modern criticism has attempted

Holand fled to sanctuary at Beverley, and his half-brother the king, who had determined to execute him for the crime, felt that he hardly had the strength to do so, considering the apparent alliance between this man and Lancaster. He came out of sanctuary unmolested, and he married Lancaster's daughter.

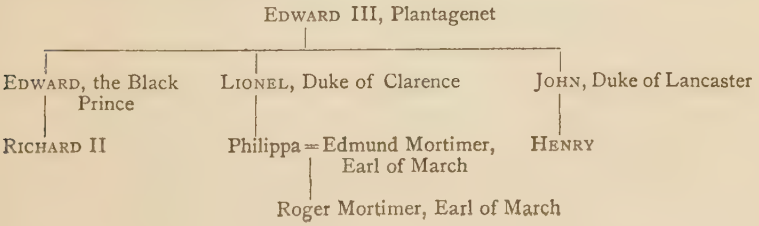
Lancaster protects the murderer Holand.

And once again that summer the king had reason to suspect his uncle. The great English army had pushed the Scots before it, burning and destroying as it went, and reaching right up to Aberdeen, when Lancaster advised a diversion in order to cut off the Scots band that was working with French auxiliaries in Cumberland and Westmorland. So strongly did Richard believe that this advice was treasonable and intended to lead to a disaster, of which John of Gaunt would take advantage, that he preferred to return to England. He defied his opponents—by making De la Pole Earl of Suffolk—and at the end of the year he took the step of publicly naming the Earl of March,[1] Roger by name, heir-presumptive to the throne; he himself having no child.

Renewed suspicion of Lancastrian treason.

to diminish that number, depending upon the document reciting the numbers of the armed divisions, and giving a total of more like 16,000. It is a good example of the false method of criticism which is led away by any fragment of record, as against common sense. Such a mediæval army did not only include the men at arms, or even the trained archers mentioned as a specific part of the royal force. There was also the great mass of the more or less trained infantry and the "rascaile."

[1] This action was very important. Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, was rightful heir to England. But he was not a male Plantagenet. He was only Plantagenet through his mother, the daughter of Clarence, elder brother of John of Gaunt. But John and his son Henry were male Plantagenets. To emphasise March's undeniable right was not only to challenge the Lancasters, but to pass over the name Plantagenet.



He gave De Vere (Oxford) the government of the Irish lordship, with the novel title of Marquis (of Dublin) and a sufficient fund for extending the king's direct rule in the island.

The episode is important. Richard designed a better understanding between England and the Irish. Had he lived to achieve it all our history would have been happier and nobler: but the Lancastrian usurpation ruined this policy and let Ireland drift away.

For two years Lancaster was absent fighting, during 1386 and 1387, to maintain his futile claim to the crown of Castille through his marriage, and fighting unfortunately. But Lancaster's absence did not relieve the young man from pressure, as it should have done. A much less able uncle, Gloucester, the youngest of Edward III's sons, took the lead of that inevitable opposition to the crown which, although feudalism was passing, the magnates were always ready to undertake when any accident of character or fate gave them the opportunity.

Richard's character of over-refinement

Now, Richard's character did enter into the misfortunes which he was later to suffer. It has been maligned. The long minority in his case (as in every other of the same sort) had its effect, quite apart from his own conduct. The absence of a direct heir to the throne was yet another factor of weakness. But to all this Richard added a certain quality which was not exactly effeminacy, but over-refinement or over-sensitiveness, and it lessened him in the eyes of men more ponderate.

The Opposition attack his friends, 1386.

A threatened invasion from France in 1386 was the first occasion of trouble. It meant the threat of more taxation, and that always meant an opportunity for rebellion on the part of the very rich men who could make themselves leaders of such a movement. The cry was, of course, against Richard's personal friends, notably De Vere, now Duke of Ireland, and Pole, Earl of Suffolk, that faithful and devoted chancellor. Both the smaller gentry in the Commons and

the magnates in the Peers demanded the dismissal of those friends.

It is significant that Richard found himself not strong enough to stand against this cabal of the wealthier class and his own relatives. His uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, threatened him with deposition. Richard may have thought for a moment of relying upon the populace of London, and to have withdrawn from that project on discovering that their principal men would not have supported him ; he gave way in the course of that autumn Parliament of 1386, and allowed a prosecution of Suffolk by the Commons, who impeached him under seven heads and condemned him to prison (whence Richard released him). It is clear that the whole affair was Gloucester's conspiracy, got up with the object of showing the power which a rebellion would have, and of terrorising the young king. The plotters went one step further and proposed to control by a Commission upon just those lines which revolt of the magnates had always taken in the past, and again Richard found himself not strong enough to repel that insolence. Their great engine was their hold on necessary, though exceptional, revenue through their mastery of the Commons. Morally, they could do very little. Though they set up a strict examination of the royal accounts they found nothing fraudulent ; they did not even put forward any grievances.

He yields.

The next year, 1387, the young man—he was nearing twenty-one—was still ill-supported, but was yet so determined to take his true place at the head of the nation, that he tried to use the strength of his own judges in support of his authority. Their reply was conclusive, as it could not but be ; it was that a King of England was the only rightful Executive Power in the realm, and that the clique of rich men dictating to him—the long-inherited trouble of the island—was without authority in tradition or right. The Commissioners, when they had seized power, had proclaimed their rule for a year. It was to be renewed just after the

The judges support the Crown, 1387.

middle of November, 1387 (on the 19th). Nine days before that date, on the 10th, young Richard rode into London to the cheers of great crowds—he was ready to use the decision of the judges as an instrument upon which to act.

But he would have to use it with sudden effect if he wanted to impress opinion. Unfortunately for him, and unknown to him, his decision had been betrayed to Gloucester. And just as the young king was about to act, on the very morrow of his entry into London, he heard that an army of 40,000 men, levied by the great lords of the Blood Royal, was in the neighbourhood of the capital and marching upon it. Richard had no such force with which to oppose it. Gloucester was at the head of this armed and successful rebellion, and with him were the Earl of Arundel and the young Earl Nottingham, while Henry of Lancaster stood ready to join. They made the usual excuse that they were rescuing the king from the hands of evil counsellors, ower-awed the mass of the Londoners, and their leaders made accusation in Westminster Hall of treason against the king's friends by name—five of them : Suffolk (De la Pole), De Vere (Duke of Ireland), the Archbishop of York, the Chief Justice, and Bramber, Richard's old tutor. These fled. Richard thought it possible that at the distance some of them reached from the capital an army could be raised for his succour ; and, indeed, the royal standard was set up in the North, and the force of Cheshire was behind it. Gloucester, with his adherents, was much stronger ; he himself desired to depose the king his nephew, and to take over the *power* of the Crown, at least, if not its name ; but here young Henry of Lancaster, Earl of Derby, the son of John of Gaunt, who was now Earl of Derby, and who already, young as he was, had his own designs, refused to follow him.

The attempt to succour Richard from the North failed. It was led by De Vere, but was blocked from the passage of the Thames at Radcot Bridge. The force was quite insufficient. Richard's own writs for a free Parliament (he

specially asked for Knights of the Shire who had taken no part in the quarrel upon either side) were cancelled by the victorious rebels. The Parliament that was summoned in the early months of 1388 was a mere gathering of the insurgents, with Richard's supporters debarred from the Peers and the Commons returned at the choice of the conquerors.

Gloucester's triumph as leader of the rebellious nobles (with Lancaster's son, Derby), 1388.

Gloucester acted as master. Bishop Arundel (the brother of Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel), now chancellor, preached a sermon opening the session, and Gloucester's Parliament proceeded to action. It refused to consider the report of those expert in the civil and common law that the action of the "Appellants" [1] was illegal, and it proceeded to murder: for murder it was, and it is noticeable that the bishops and abbots left the House rather than be consenting to what followed.[2] Suffolk himself had escaped abroad—so had De Vere (they died in exile). The Archbishop of York was not killed, but deprived. He also died in exile. The judges were *condemned* to death (after vainly trying to save their lives by pleading that they had acted through fear of the king). They were reprieved and exiled. But Bramber was put to death, so was the Chief Justice. Four knights, friends of the king, were marked out for death, of whom the best known was Simon Burley, the Black Prince's comrade, the loyal guardian of Richard as a boy, and one whom Richard loved as though he had been a father. The young and gracious Anne, the queen, and the king, her husband, did all they could to save him. Even young Henry of Lancaster (Derby) thought it politic to avoid *that* murder; but the determination to humiliate the king carried the day, and Burley was put to death upon the 5th of May. A week later his three companions suffered.

His murder.

After all that bloodshed, Gloucester, with his fellow-conspirators, "Appellants," and Henry of Lancaster, remained

[1] Gloucester and the Earl of Arundel and Warwick had formally "appealed of treason" the king's friends in the year before, and were called "the Lords Appellant."

[2] It can be argued that this was no more than the regular abstention of clerks from "things of blood."

master of the kingdom, and Richard, the rightful king, was wholly in eclipse for a full year: when upon May 3rd, 1389, there came one of those sharp and sudden strokes in policy which you find not only in the Middle Ages, but scattered up and down history, and which look inexplicable until one gets the key to the affair.

Richard seizes power, May 3rd, 1389.

Richard was seated throned in the Council, the nominal head of the more powerful men about him. Gloucester, his tyrant uncle, still apparently the real master of all, was facing him. He turned to that lord and abruptly asked him, "How old am I?" When Gloucester had said, "In your 22nd year," he replied that he was of full age to govern, dismissed the Council and renewed it of his own will.

His success due to quarrels among the rebellious lords,

What explains the sudden submission of men who seemed to be still all-powerful is, once again, the sleepless Lancastrian policy: the rebel clique of royalties and their hangers-on had been split from within by Henry of Lancaster; Derby, John of Gaunt's son: the ablest, the youngest, the most secretive of the plotters. It no longer suited the Lancastrian book that Gloucester should grow in power.

and to the Lancastrian jealousy of Gloucester.

Derby was therefore of the New Council, with Gloucester gone; but his treason had yet to be deferred, for the quarrel among the conspirators had given Richard his chance with opinion: the appeal to the traditions of the people of England and to the right of his blood. That appeal and the support of the populace gave him ten years of personal power which were the best the country had known within most men's memory.

Richard from this moment shows a patient wisdom which, as a boy, he had not known. He sets out to wear down opposition by policy; to rule undisputed yet with as little friction as possible, playing his disloyal relatives and their adherents like fish on a line. He watches their quarrels. He uses them. I think it was his wife who made him thus wise.

Thus, John of Gaunt having failed in his Spanish cam-

paign, is recalled to England urgently by the king, and is given the revenues of Guienne. He is the first prince of the blood, and overshadows his younger brother, Gloucester. But Gloucester is of the Council, as is right for a king's uncle. He makes William of Wykeham chancellor. He forbears to recall the exiles. When William of Wykeham resigns the Great Seal through the fatigues of age, Richard even appoints in his place a personal enemy, Arundel's brother, the bishop who had conspired against him so bitterly, and had been made chancellor during the rebellion by his own fellow rebels.

When the rule of one man succeeds to that of an oligarchy all things go better: and here the one man had right. He remitted in part the excessive taxation which Gloucester's Parliaments had imposed. He brought to a conclusion the long struggle against the abuse of "Provision," that is, the filling of livings and sees by papal nominees, often non-resident. The full power of Præmunire belongs to these years of the young king's personal and excellent rule.[1] Henceforward the dangerous abuse whereby Church revenue here could be drained abroad without any true excuse of necessity by the universal Church, already checked, was checked still more. And if the powers of Præmunire were themselves put to enormous abuse for the sake of a religious revolution more than a century later, that absurdity must not blind us to its just use in the interval. The Statute had the effect almost of a Concordat—would that it had been explicitly a Concordat![2] At any rate, it more than half resolved the strain between due spiritual loyalty to the supremacy of the Holy See and just protest against its fiscal excesses.

Præmunire.

[1] Oddly enough, this last and most drastic, Præmunire, acted on as a Statute, was never formally passed in full Parliament assembled. The clergy—or, rather, the bishops and great abbots—thought its terms such that they might even be used against the due powers of the Pope. The Commons did not pass it, but *asked to see it again*—and never saw it! It provides forfeiture for those who bring in Papal bulls or rescripts without licence from the Crown.

[2] It was protested nearly 40 years after when the Papacy became united under Martin V. But the protest dropped.

Richard's wise policy of using time.

The young king, now so fully restored to his proper power, having had the wisdom to compromise with these uncles and cousins of his and their greedy followers, to recall Lancaster on his return from the South, to have Gloucester in the Council, as wisely kept his true friends by his side. He used with sense the effect of time and, without yet avenging, was able to restore in honour even the murdered men. He brought back from exile the surviving three judges, gave a new see and a pension to his confessor, the Bishop of Chichester, who had suffered persecution for him, and, in a space of three years, brought back Oxford's body from Louvain to bury it with solemn pomp at Colne.

Political murder, introduced by Lancastrian ambition, marks all the later struggles.

What neither Richard nor any other man could undo was the blood feud: the effect of those cold killings which are the mark of the decline in the English Middle Ages. They come again and again, they fill the next century with irreconcilable personal hatred to the death, and it is they —begun by the rebels under Gloucester—which (continued through the later Lancastrian usurpation and through the Civil Wars of the Roses) changed the political conscience of England and ruined the Plantagenet name.

Death of Richard's Queen, Anne of Bohemia, June 7th, 1394.

The king continued his success in administration: he saw to a good ordering of justice in England, specially helping the lesser men to bring forward their pleas. All went well save that his childless wife died during the height of this success, on June 7th, 1394. Richard was badly broken by the blow—with a passion of grief incomprehensible to the base men of his own blood, who were secretly his enemies. The funeral was the occasion of an outbreak by him against the Earl of Arundel, who behaved outrageously. But the king recovered his poise. His intense grief did not long disturb his judgment nor check his industry. That grief showed itself in an avoidance of the places where she and he had been together, and in pulling down the palace at Sheen, where she had died. But it was not allowed to interfere with public duty. Less than four months after the intoler-

able thing had struck him he was sailing with a great host for Ireland; and here let me return to that capital point of Irish policy which I have already mentioned.

Richard in Ireland, September, 1394, to May, 1395.

It should ever be remembered of Richard that, had he not been betrayed and murdered, he might have founded a permanent peace between the Irish and England, and have welded the two together. He alone of his line seems to have understood the magnitude of the problem and its solution. He alone set out actively to study it at first hand. None of his predecessors since the first settlements under Henry II, 200 years before, had crossed the sea to Ireland after coronation. None of his successors followed. He started in September, 1394, and both the dispositions he could take with his opponent kinsmen and his ability to leave England for so long are proofs of the station he had so patiently attained. He got John of Gaunt off to his Duchy of Guienne; he took Gloucester with him; he left as regent in England, the most insignificant of his uncles, the Duke of York.

Arrived in Ireland his success was rapid. It was based, like all he now did, on policy. He conciliated the native rulers; he managed the Anglo-Irish families who governed half the island, and who were rapidly becoming, or had become, as Irish as the rest; he reformed all the administration of the small English "Pale"—the district round and north of Dublin, directly ruled by the English king's envoy. He received ready allegiance, and when he sailed back for England in the late spring of the next year, 1395, he had laid firm foundations for the future.

His next great work—in the true spirit of De la Pole, who had trained him—was to end once and for all the "Hundred Years War," and to restore permanent repose to our Western culture. There was already a truce between the two crowns with two more years of it to run, when Richard conceived the design of making it a lasting peace by an alliance. And all that policy reduced the fiscal burden. There was never a time when the mass of men, in that

generation of protest against excessive taxation, were freer from the anxiety of it.

French marriage and ultimate hope of an heir.

The alliance Richard had in mind—which should have meant a permanent relief from the vast expenditure of these wars, could only be accomplished at the expense of a dangerous delay in the provision of a direct heir. He must make a marriage with a princess of the French House, and for the moment his only opportunity for doing so was to ask for a nominal marriage with the child Isabella (she was as yet but eight) and her crowning. It was a choice of evils—to miss permanent peace or to risk more perilous years during which the lack of a son would perpetually tempt his rivals to undo him. He chose the latter evil as the less. It was perhaps an error.

The child Princess Isabella of France crowned Queen of England, January, 1397.

The pact was made, the child solemnly contracted, in the late autumn of 1396, and crowned in the January of 1397. Had there been present for this union between the Plantagenet and the Valois a girl of marriageable age, our story would know nothing of Agincourt or of St. Joan, for a son born to Richard in 1397 would have secured both the right English line and the end of the effort at a dual realm on both sides the sea.

All that could be done for security Richard did. So far as a careful balancing of reward and division among those who were so near him, so powerful, and so ready to destroy him, could go, he pursued it. When John of Gaunt's wife (the heiress of Castille and the cause of his futile Spanish wars) had died, that too-powerful man shocked the world by marrying his mistress of long standing, Katharine Swynford (Chaucer's sister-in-law, say some). Richard legitimised the many bastards—Beaufort by name—and gave the eldest the earldom of Somerset. When the metropolitan see of Canterbury fell vacant he appointed Arundel archbishop. He even offered Gloucester Ireland. But the danger endured.

Beginning of further rebellious efforts, 1397.

The sign that so long a period of prosperity, economy, and peace under a strong monarchy was in peril came with

that same year, 1397. The restless, short-sighted Gloucester stirred—he worked (had he known it) not for himself but for the house and line of his deeper brother, who now felt aged, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.

Gloucester had himself been compelled by the necessity of the situation to begin the policy of peace with France when he was in power. Yet—merely to show that he should be feared—he played on the feelings of the old fighting gentlemen who remembered the traditions of the great wars; he goaded the king publicly as much as he dared; he was presumably behind that odd episode when one Huxey, sitting as a member of the clergy in the Lower House, sent a motion up to the Lords complaining of the expenditure in the royal household. Richard tried to compromise: he offered his uncle the government of Ireland—which was refused. In the middle of that summer (1397) the crisis came. Gloucester was actively conspiring again with the Archbishop of Canterbury—his associate of the past—with the Archbishop's brother, Arundel, and with Warwick—both former fellows in humiliating the crown during Richard's boyhood. The king was forced to strong action. All three laymen were seized, and Gloucester taken to Calais for more security. The Lords about the king had approved: Rutland (the son of the king's uncle of York—not trustworthy); York himself, old Lancaster and, for reasons of his own, Lancaster's son, Derby: and their approval was published.

Huxey's motion.

Gloucester, the two Arundels, and Warwick conspire.

Richard seizes Gloucester and sends him to Calais.

York and his son approved sincerely; the Duke of Lancaster and his son only approved because Gloucester was a rival to them, and a nuisance, and *their* time was not ripe.

The stroke was a bold one, but necessary. Richard, a man now thirty, showed high capacity in taking it. The Commons, the registrars of whatever held power, impeached the Archbishop. The Lords "appealed" Gloucester, Warwick, and Arundel of treason. Gloucester was sent for from Calais to answer at the Bar of the Lords. The summons

was returned with news that he was dead.[1] But Richard was still by nature light of hand. There was no bloodshed. Warwick and the Archbishop were exiled. Arundel went off to France. It was an error upon the king's part to spare them thus. By execution he might have cowed those about him—every one of whom was his enemy, in that evil air of the late XIVth mediæval court, the beginning of the century-long agony of the Plantagenets. As it was he made them by his mildness alarmed as to his further action without sufficiently subduing them.

He had just made his old enemy Nottingham, Duke of Norfolk; and Derby, Earl of Hereford. They were the two last remaining of the original "*Appellants*" who had robbed Richard of his freedom when he was little more than a boy. Norfolk whispered his fears to Henry of Bolingbroke, Derby —now—Hereford: he little understood either the tenacity or the cunning of his confidant. The whispered confidence filled that confidant with only one thought—here was another rival to be eliminated! Hereford at once betrayed Norfolk to the king—for the king got the news and ordered the betrayer to make accusation before the Parliament assembled at Shrewsbury. This judgment of Gloucester and its sequel had filled the autumn of 1397. The full Parliament of three estates—Lords, Commons, and Clergy—met in January, 1398,[2] and there at Shrewsbury did Henry of Lancaster

[1] After the murder of Richard and the successful Lancastrian usurpation, a circumstantial and detailed story with witnesses was put about that Gloucester had been put to death by force: smothered. It may be so; but no sufficient proof was offered, or, rather, such as was offered was clearly under official pressure, for full examination was refused. The best basis for accepting the tale is that Gloucester's appeal for life, added to his confession, was not published. But why should it be? And why should an admitting traitor not expect death?

[2] In this Parliament was made a most interesting constitutional experiment, which unfortunately could not be continued after the Lancastrian usurpation, because the new illegitimate monarchy was not strong enough. A small committee of Lords and Commons was appointed to do the work of Parliament continuously in the intervals—often prolonged—when, no extra or abnormal revenue being needed, there was no need for summoning the full assembly. Such a committee, had it become a permanent institution, would have strengthened the

accuse Norfolk. The Parliament had done its work and dispersed, a committee of both Houses had looked into the accusation and the reply. Nothing was determined. There were no witnesses. It was ordered that the issue should be left to the judgment of God, " wager of battle," as befitting men of such lineage.

On September 16th, 1398, the lists were prepared—at Coventry. But Richard had made his plan. He knew that *both* men would, if they could, destroy him, and that, of the two, Henry of Lancaster was far the more dangerous and treasonable. He took the quarrel into his own hands and banished both men. Norfolk—an admitted traitor—went on pilgrimage in expiation and died abroad, in Venice. Henry of Lancaster, now Earl of Hereford, was treated generously —far too generously—by the king, his cousin. He was allowed to linger in Calais at his will ; he was given large presents. Such treatment only confirmed him in his determination to betray finally and fully at last. He went to the French court and there awaited his moment.

Exile of Henry of Lancaster, September 16th, 1398.

By such leniency Richard had failed to dissipate the brooding Lancastrian peril. There were, in any case, even if he had been more secure through acting more severely, great difficulties surrounding his position.

He could only become secure if he governed with full individual power ; there was no permanence in that security if he did not. If he governed by Council, that meant by leave of the great lords who were in a chronic state of rebellion. If without, he had not sufficient revenue. He had the tolls on wool and leather for life, and the old feudal dues, but that gave nothing like enough for the full expenses of the English realm at that date. His choice lay between making himself, the legitimate king, permanently secure by sharp and strong but (for the moment) arbitrary action, and

Difficult conditions of Richard's new position.

crown (to the great profit of the masses as opposed to the landowners and rich burgesses), and it would have had great practical value in organising and developing the work of the central government.

going under—subjected to the wealthy nobles under Lancastrian leadership. The more surely would they take their revenge, as he had already provoked them by checking their rebellion without destroying its authors—as he should have done.

Revenue he raised by loans and by fines on adherents of Gloucester's attempt; and when John of Gaunt died on February 3rd, 1399, he determined to put an end at last to the Lancastrian menace.

On John of Gaunt's death, February 3rd, 1399, he confiscates the Lancastrian title and lands to the Crown of England.

He knew how steadily his cousin Henry was plotting against him abroad. He confiscated the great Lancastrian lands on the judicial decision that Henry's outlawry prevented his inheriting his father's title and the revenue it connoted. That decision was confirmed by a nominal sentence of treason against the agent who had acted as proctor, in Henry's absence, in collecting for him the Lancastrian revenue. Now at last Richard felt himself established and his kingship founded.

He determined to use his new security for a very necessary expedition to Ireland. We—who know the sequel—easily condemn that step. At the time and place it did not seem unwise. His heir-presumptive, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, had just been killed in Ireland, which he had been sent to rule, leaving only his son Edmund, a child of seven, as the new heir-presumptive to the throne. Irish revenue had fallen to nothing after the king's four years' absence, and should be restored to its old very high value. He did not know how widespread was the net of treason about him. The little queen was now in her twelfth year. In a few years there might be born to him an heir of his own blood.

Richard made ready to sail and took with him the son of Henry of Lancaster, a boy, later to be Henry V. True to his nature, he treated that child well, and the father in exile could be disdainfully sure that the advantage of holding such a hostage would not be taken.

He left his uncle York—whom of all the magnates he

least distrusted—and sailed from Milford Haven on the 29th of May, 1399, landing at Waterford on the 31st. York's son, Albemarle, was to follow with relay of troops and provisions. Richard's second expedition to Ireland, May 29th, 1399.

Albemarle betrayed. There can be no doubt that he was in league with his cousin Henry over in France; with such help at home, Henry judged that his time had come. Albemarle's treason.

The first step in Albemarle's treason took the plausible and easy form of delay. Richard was held up in Dublin till July, waiting for him and his fresh troops, pay-money, and rations. He did not join Richard in Dublin till Henry had all his plans laid and was moving.

That cunning man landed with a small force at Ravenspur in the mouth of the Humber on the 4th of July. Westmorland and the Percies joined him. He swore in the most solemn and public manner at Doncaster that he had come only to claim his lands (in that he would have his tenants behind him over all the great northern territories), and had no such treason in his mind as grasping at the throne. Henry of Lancaster lands in the Humber, July 4th, 1399.

York—who had not yet betrayed—marched west with an army, as though to meet his king on landing. Henry, with rapidly increasing forces, met York at Berkeley Castle, on the 27th of July, 1399. Their interview was too friendly. By August 8th Henry held Chester. Meanwhile, Richard had landed. York betrays, July 27th, 1399.

The king had heard early of Henry's coming to England. He ought to have sailed at once, but a second step in Albemarle's treason checked him. That conspirator—whom he still trusted—advised delay in order to make all ready. The delay was fatal—and was intended to be fatal. The hasty levies which had been gathered for Richard in North Wales by Salisbury, sent on before, to Conway, could not be kept together indefinitely: they began to disperse before Lancaster had seized Cheshire. When Richard landed (in South Wales) he still had with him a part of his army from Ireland—all that could be spared from Irish garrisons and from Salisbury's detachments—no more; yet that

insufficient body could have challenged battle had it held together.

But what now ruined the king was the agreement of all the great men that Lancaster had now the preponderant army. They decided—so vile had the morals of their class become—to desert their king.

The country populace, apart from the Lancastrian territories, were all for their king, and the general levies flocked readily to his service, but no magnate would be trusted. If Richard could have been certain of his army, fresh from Ireland, in the south of Wales, he might yet have won with it.

Richard is left without an army, August, 1399.

But he could not be certain of it. In point of fact, the leaders of that army withdrew it and went over to the enemy. Richard was perfectly right to take the only chance he had, although it was a forlorn chance, and to go as quickly as he could from South Wales to North Wales to pick up Salisbury's force. That force had proved quite insufficient to meet the groups of armed men under their lords, who were marching with Henry upon Chester. It fell back and disbanded.

Richard found himself in Conway Castle with no more than a guard of about sixty men. The king passed from castle to castle, returning to Conway, and thence sending envoys to negotiate surrender with the great rebel who stood firm at Chester.

There followed a counter embassy from Henry of Lancaster to Richard at Conway, and at this critical point, when we desire most to know what exactly happened, there arises one of those doubts which torture history. There are two accounts—one that he agreed to abdicate upon terms of a proper income, of his own safety of course, and that of his friends; another, that the Lancastrians promised he should not be deposed, and that on the terms of that promise Richard consented to put himself in Lancaster's power.

He refuses to abdicate.

The best evidence by far is for the second. There was no reason why Richard should consent to abdicate. The nation

certainly would not have tolerated his open murder, and (a point of the highest importance) Henry had never expressed the desire that Richard should abdicate, had never made it part of his programme, had never told the people that he had arrived with that object in view. On the contrary, he had said that he had come to "help to a better government," and had solemnly sworn that he had no thought of the crown.

Moreover, the true story has one convincing piece of evidence in its favour:—

If Richard had, indeed, promised to abdicate at Conway, how can we account for the fact that Henry, when he later received that cousin, publicly reiterated his intention to "help him in governing England?"

We must remember that Richard was a very brave man. Of all the Lancastrian calumnies against him (which were revived and became fixed historical falsehoods under the Tudors), the calumny of cowardice was never of any effect. He showed the Plantagenet spirit more brilliantly than any others of his blood at the time. He had, beside great courage, a contempt for that slyness which was the leading mark of Henry's character—and therefore ill-understood the power of cunning.

I think common sense should decide for the second version: Richard never abdicated. But he was without forces, and he surrendered at Flint Castle on the 19th of August. Thenceforward Richard II was in his cousin Henry's power.

The cousins met and looked into each other's eyes at Flint, on the 19th of August: two men each in his thirty-third year; a contrast in every way. Richard disarmed; Henry backed by a great force and confident; the mild, softened face of the tall king, with its scanty hair on lip and chin, wide eyes, and long golden hair, countered by the broad square features of his rival, still vigorous in spite of disease, and framed by a vigorous pointed russet beard, the eyes alert and merciless. Lancaster lied to the last. He

greeted the head of the family as sovereign, showed deference, protested that he had but come to "help" in government. Then, with the farce played out, the army was set southward down the Chester road. A retirement to London began, with Richard as Henry's captive indeed—but still king.

The king reaches London, September 1st, 1399.

The long column, in arms, came outside the city on Monday, the 1st of September. The Mayor and Guilds met and reverenced the king; but the whole command was with Henry of Lancaster, who sent his superior and victim off to Westminster to avoid popular demonstration in his favour, while he himself made a progress through the town by Cheapside to St. Paul's (and his father's tomb). On the morrow, Tuesday, September 2nd, 1399, Richard of Bordeaux, King of England, was secretly taken down the Thames on the ebb to the Tower, so that no man should mark his passage; and he was never more seen of any man save his hired jailers and his captor's servants, who did him to death.

The great Council of the Realm, the nobles and prelates (with squires and merchants attendant as Commons), was to meet that autumn on September 20th in Westminster Hall. The prisoner had been promised access to it. He was betrayed for the last time, and his access to the Parliament denied. In his place a document was produced before the Assembly on September 30th, purporting to be Richard's own voluntary resignation of the Crown—dated September 29th, the day before, and filled with absurdities. Henry committed his last perjury and claimed the Crown, which the subservient assembly allowed without protest. He made the sign of the Cross and spoke in the new common language. "In the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost I, Henry of Lancaster, challenge this realm of England;" and when they had flattered him and even preached a sermon in his honour, he added in the same new common tongue which to-day we all speak,[1] "Sirs, I thank you, spiritual and temporal."

Henry of Bolingbroke seizes the throne in Westminster Hall, Tuesday, September 30th, 1399.

[1] His own private speech and letter writing was still the French of his class. He and Gloucester and Richard and all the magnates still talked commonly,

That was the end. He could make no real claim—save some few vague words about "coming from the good Lord Henry III." He had no claim, except the support of his fellow nobles and kinsmen of the blood royal, who were determined to be free of authority, and who, as we shall see, quarrelled with him at once, challenging his new precarious, and unfounded rule.

All this then, the active usurpation, was on September 30th.

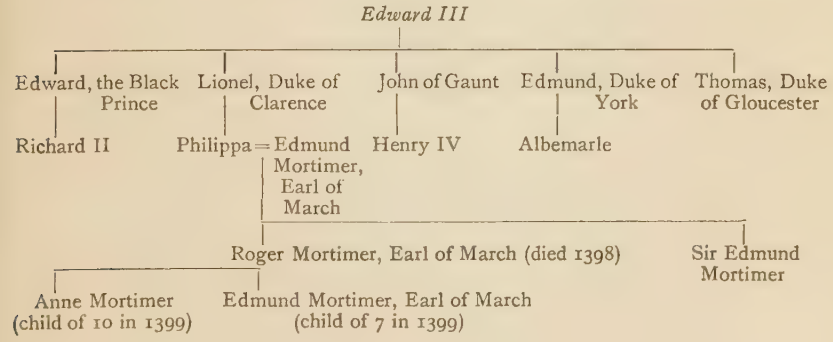
On October 13th, 1399, Henry IV was crowned.[1] The ritual was followed strictly upon precedent, save for one emphatic detail: the usurper chose that the sword which he had upon him when he landed at Ravenspur should be borne upon his left unsheathed.

It was a sort of symbol or threat, that though he had no right to the throne but was taking it by force, yet that force could still be used against those who might rebel against his unlawful authority.

Throughout the reign (short, troubled and, in the mind of the new ruler himself, half accursed) what the reader must remember is that Henry was only one of a very small knot of exceedingly powerful lords.

wrote and thought in French. But Henry, and probably all the others, could now speak English on occasion.

[1] At this point it is well to recall the relationships between Henry, Richard, and the rest:—


Edward III
Edward, the Black Prince
Lionel, Duke of Clarence
John of Gaunt
Edmund, Duke of York
Thomas, Duke of Gloucester
Richard II
Philippa = Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March
Henry IV
Albemarle
Roger Mortimer, Earl of March (died 1398)
Sir Edmund Mortimer
Anne Mortimer (child of 10 in 1399)
Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March (child of 7 in 1399)

He was indeed Plantagenet. Save for the rightful heir, the Earl of March (who was a child of seven and not a Plantagenet), he was the next heir after that he should have murdered (as he was about to do) his cousin Richard.

Of those who conspired with him—they are not a score all told, they had England at their disposition, and they betrayed one another without ceasing—at least half, or more than half, were close relatives in blood; and the directing part were of the royal family.

But in the practical life of the time Henry only counted as one of the great nobles. It must be remembered what a gulf there was in men's minds between a true king, legitimate, in the right line, and anybody else. That he was cousin, or even fourth heir [1] to Richard, did not affect the mind of that time more than it would affect the mind of our time to hear that a man's valuables had been stolen by a cousin who would inherit them from him if he should die childless. Had not usurpation taken place and Richard been carried away to imprisonment and death, there was no knowing that Richard would have died childless. As against Richard, Henry had a social standing but little superior to the other few and exceedingly powerful landed magnates of his time.

Now the fact that he was thus in a most uncertain position is apparent in any number of things, which we find upon his seizing power. His fellow magnates are relieved by the definition of treason being brought back to the old statutes. In other words, he will not proceed against any rebel arbitrarily—as a fact, he did proceed most arbitrarily, but at any rate, he had that change made in the Parliament summoned to his orders.

Again, there was to be no more "Committee of Lords and Commons," only Parliament as a whole was to be consulted, and that meant the great lords. In a small committee the king might put in his supporters from any rank

[1] First comes young Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, then (second) his sister, Anne, then (third) his uncle Sir Edmund.

down to the merchants and the lower gentry from the commoners, as Richard had done ; but in full Council or Parliament only the great lords really counted.

Next, we must remember that in this, as in every other rebellion, among the perpetual rebellions against the English monarchy of the Middle Ages, the idea of party does not exist. There are no lines of cleavage. Each great man is able to appear at the head of a considerable force, his tenants and people he could hire. Each fights for his own hand, and appears first on one side and then on the other, according as advantage appeals. As to considering the whig "constitutional principles" any one with an elementary appreciation of the Middle Ages should smile at the term. There was one moral bond in those days, and a strong one, the bond of legitimate hereditary right. Those who rebelled against it rebelled for advantage : either positive, to acquire wealth, or negative, to avoid ruin by confiscation or impoverishment by taxation. What they all felt to be a real moral authority (which the better of them attacked with reluctance, and even the worst of them with some fear) was the authority of the anointed king, of the legitimate heir, or (even in the late XIVth century) the remaining, but antiquated authority of the feudal lord.

Where the Lancastrian usurpation differed from the rebellions that had gone before, was in the weakening of all that authority, not in the substitution of a new one.

The decline of the English Middle Ages after the Black Death was a decline in the sense that men were more ready to do evil. It was not a decline in the sense that their ideal standards had changed.

. . . . . .

Ten days after the ominous ceremony of the coronation the new king caused the lords to meet in secret at the end of Parliament, and in that unwatched privacy his hitherto right-hand man, Percy of Northumberland, asked his colleagues what their judgment was on the custody of Richard,

adding the emphatic falsehood that in any case Henry had determined to spare his life.

It was decided to send the unfortunate victim to some castle where, above all, he could be kept from the popular eye and concourse. It seems by what follows that he was sent to Pontefract, and Henry personally took within four days the action so decided.

What happened after that will never be certain. It is one of the most debated points of fact in the history of England. We have these data to go upon : (1) The decision to put Richard away, and where there could be no popular support for him, was ratified on October 27th, 1399 ; (2) before the end of January, 1400, the King of France, Richard's father-in-law, said that he was dead ; (3) the son and heir of Percy, Henry's ally in the rebellion, fellow-conspirator, and spokesman in putting Richard away, not four years later publicly announced that Richard had been deliberately starved to death in the course of fifteen days ; (4) many conflicting popular rumours on his death had, before the younger Percy's declaration, contained the same idea ; (5) there was shown for the quieting of popular feeling a dead body with a most emaciated face in St. Paul's Cathedral in London on the 12th March, 1400 (the body was brought from Pontefract) ; (6) though many believed that Richard was still alive (you always get that after the startling disappearance of a prominent man), and though one purporting to be Richard was put forward in Scotland by the King of Scotland (but carefully kept in the background), it is not credible that the vast crowd who passed through St. Paul's on the exhibition of the body should have been deceived, or that Henry would have exhibited it unless he was certain that it would have been recognised, and that men would thus be sure that Richard, the true king, was dead.

I think we may take it as fairly certain that Richard of Bordeaux, second of that name, King of England, was either killed or left to die of starvation, on some day between the

27th October, 1399, and the first week of March, or, in any case, and at the latest, the 11th March, 1400; and quite possibly before the middle of January, 1400.[1] His cousin Henry of Bolingbroke, now crowned as Henry IV, was the murderer.

[1] Allowing for embalming.

(C) Henry IV and Henry V

(From between Mid-January and March 12th, 1400, to August 31st, 1422—22½ Years)

Henry IV

(Some Time between Mid-January and March 12th, 1400, to March 19th, 1413—13 Years)

HERE, then, is Henry of Lancaster precariously king under the title of Henry IV. Of the legitimate heir, the seven year old child Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March,[1] whom Richard had, quite justly, named his heir, not even mention is made. Henry's own son, young Henry, later to be Henry V, a boy of twelve, was put forward as heir-apparent. It is characteristic of Richard, as we have seen, that though he rightly exiled the father, he treated the son very kindly, keeping him safe during the Irish expedition, and handing him over unharmed when he came to Flint.

[1] Let me recall once more the title of Edmund Mortimer to the throne in 1399. Richard II was sole heir of the Black Prince. His uncle, Clarence, came next after the Black Prince; therefore, if Richard were to die childless, Clarence's child would be next in succession. For John of Gaunt, Lancaster, had been younger than Clarence, so that Henry of Lancaster came after Clarence's children. Now Clarence had had an heiress, Philippa, who had married Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March. Both she and her husband were dead before the last years of Richard II. But they had two sons, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, and Sir Edmund Mortimer. The elder son died in 1398, but he left this child Edmund, Earl of March, who was eight years old when Richard II was dethroned and done to death by Henry of Lancaster, before an heir could be born to him by his second wife. Therefore, when Henry of Lancaster usurped the throne this young boy Edmund was rightful king. His sister Anne was next in succes-

The first thing a modern reader might ask about the Lancastrian usurpation is this: "Was it popularly supported? Had it national opinion behind it?"

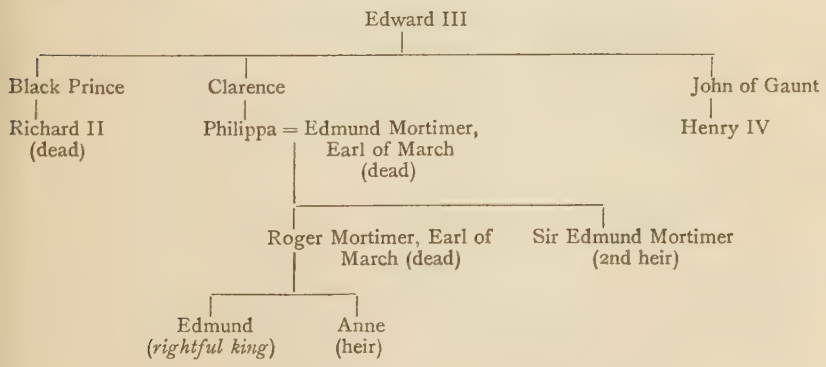
Forces making for and against the now accomplished Lancastrian usurpation.

The questions would show an unhistorical spirit, because, in the later XIVth century men no more thought of the English Crown as dependent on popular opinion than we to-day think of the exercise of the banking monopoly as so depending. Nevertheless, there is *some* connection between such opinion, and the success of a mediæval crown or a modern banking monopoly. It is therefore necessary, if we are to understand the affair, to appreciate how it struck contemporaries, and in what numbers.

(1) All men strongly held by the sanctity and heavenly right of the "Sang real," the Blood Royal. The feeling had deepened for generations, spreading out from the Capetian example in France to all Europe, and especially affecting England. A Plantagenet was of the sacred blood, and there was, on that account, some confused preference for a Plantagenet in right male descent over a man who, though heir by primogeniture, was Plantagenet only through his mother.

(2) But this very same feeling aroused in all men a devotion to primogeniture, the right of the eldest born, and therefore of the children, even the daughters, of the eldest born. Here again the French Capetian monarchy of Paris

sion; his uncle, the elder Edmund, next—and Henry of Lancaster only came fourth:—



had set the model for many generations past, and had influenced all Europe. It is true that the French monarchy had excluded female succession, under the fiction of the "Salic Law;" but that was regarded as an exception peculiar to France. Normally, a crown, like an estate, passed to or through the nearest heir, male or female. The little Earl of March, therefore, in the year 1400 was the true king. Should he die childless his sister Anne had the next right, and after her the uncle, Sir Edmund Mortimer.

Had the little Earl of March been a grown man in 1400, and possessed of vigour and desire to rule, the primogeniture of his grandfather, Clarence, would have told heavily in his favour: as it was, he could be neglected—especially as he grew up to be a mild youth without ambition or initiative. Yet Henry kept him closely confined.

(3) The retainers, dependants, tenants, friends of the Lancastrian inherited estates, were very numerous, and strongly supported their social head in his restoration and in his claims to play a leading part. He was also very popular in London. But the feeling hardly went to the extreme of supporting usurpation of the throne.

(4) So far as *personal* feelings went, Richard had devoted friends—he attracted others and was loved. Henry most certainly was not. But the number of such close, personal supporters attached to a man by his character and presence is always small. What had more effect in this connection was the vague, popular feeling for a man whom all had known as a young and charming prince, and whom they had seen in splendour and power. There were many acts, during and after the revolution, of devotion to Richard or his memory: none to Henry.

(5) A king actually ruling, and ruling after due coronation and anointment, was of powerful effect on men's minds. The ceremony had a sacramental value, and when once a habit of action by the king *de facto* was established and recognised, Englishmen of the later Middle Ages soon associ-

ated it with the idea of right to rule. Henry, ruling, had repeated experience of this in the support given him by the populace of more than one town against those who conspired against him.

(6) But lastly, and far more important than any of these factors, was the plain fact of Richard's being, when the revolution began, the king. He was a king who had successfully stood up to and mastered the most powerful rich men, and kept them under : who reigned in high pomp and spectacle ; who was still young and a fine popular figure. But overwhelmingly more important in the mind of contemporaries than any such advantages was the mere fact of his kingship. Had Richard (for instance) been killed in Ireland, or had he died a natural death in 1399, Henry might very well have succeeded with the general agreement of all. But Richard was still king : rightful king : only heir of the eldest born of Edward III : chief Plantagenet. Henry's action, therefore, had for contemporaries all the savour of treason. But, still worse, it had the taint of regicide—and the immorality of that act was never forgiven. It remained a persistent popular memory. It rendered Henry's own brief reign unstable and dependent on currying favour with powerful interests ; it compelled him and his son to try the popularising effect of foreign conquest : when that experiment failed it ruined his house. The three Lancastrian Henrys—IV, V, and VI—held the admitted title of king for sixty years. Yet that long lapse of time was not sufficient to weaken the moral ill-ease the original usurpation had aroused. When we turn from factors of general opinion in great bodies of men to factors of political power in the hands of a few, we discover the secret of Henry's original success. *Here* he had, at first, real and solid backing. Strong and direct central rule, such as Richard's before the usurpation, is of obvious advantage to the masses ; but it curbs the power of the very wealthy. The great nobles, the great churchmen, and lesser landowners, the merchants of the town—especially

the seaports and London—tended to be in opposition under Richard, as rich men are naturally the opponents of popular monarchy. Organised wealth and social leadership (on the whole and with many exceptions) supported the usurpation, expecting it to increase their power against the Crown. That is the meaning of the conciliar support Henry received—for Parliament meant at that time the permanent group of great nobles and churchmen with occasionally attendant commons, who were chosen through official action to register and support, as squires and merchants, the decisions of the rulers, and whose perpetual complaint was against the now necessary new standard of taxation. But to talk of a "Parliamentary" or (still worse) a "Constitutional," title of Henry IVth is absurd. It is reading the XIXth century into the XIVth.

Henry had *one* real title in the minds of his contemporaries and only one. He was a Plantagenet. And by the time he had got rid of—presumably by murder—his cousin Richard, he was the head of the Plantagenet family.

So things stood for Henry in the actual moment of his crime: a conflict of forces which, on balance, secured his part of power.

But the equilibrium did not last.

By far the most powerful of the things making for his original success was the irritation against perpetual demands for money on the part of Richard's Government. Such demands were inevitable. The old regular revenue, automatically coming in from feudal sources to the Crown, no longer sufficed the machinery of government. But there was not yet, nor would be for more than a century to come, an acceptance of the necessary new supplementary revenue as normal. Any one who attempts an estimate—even between the very wide limits which the lack of record permits—is astonished at the smallness of these exceptional grants. One authority tells us that "a fifteenth" (one of the regular—and purely conventional—terms of a levy) came to some £36,000—say £1,400,000 of our money. Another au-

thority makes it much less, calling "half a tenth and a fifteenth" no more than £18,000 odd. But even at the higher level it is but the subsistence of some twelve to fifteen thousand of the workers in a population of several millions. Moreover, we know, by an experiment attempted in this reign, that a 5 per cent tax on landed incomes was thought so enormous that all record of it was destroyed lest it should become a precedent.

With the best will in the world to secure the support of the well-to-do, the new usurping Government had to be perpetually coming to them for money, exactly as Richard had done, and they soon found they had gained nothing by the exchange.

Therefore the reign is one long series of shocks and swayings, with turmoil after turmoil, no rest, and increasing weakness.

Those who desired to see the working of divine vengeance upon Henry of Bolingbroke had ample satisfaction. He can trust no one, not even of his original supporters, not even his own son. He is within an ace of losing all in one battle, not three years after his coronation: is compelled to savage vengeance, sacrilege, and occasional terror to maintain himself at all. Under him the magnificence of the old court is lost. He has to truckle in the most humiliating way to the landowners and commercial men, allowing them to reduce his household and control his accounts. His fears lead him to the summary execution of an archbishop. His health goes all to pieces before he is forty. He dies loathsome with skin disease and an epileptic long before his fiftieth year.

The brief foreign triumph of his successor—itself the source of later evils innumerable—and the Lancastrian legend deliberately fostered by the Tudors, have given Henry of Lancaster a very false position in the story of England. His reign, in its reality, was a sinking welter, as it deserved to be. His son's bore no fruit. His grandson's was a story of shame abroad followed by murderous civil wars at home.

As an example of the sudden decline of Lancastrian England, the abandonment of Ireland stands out vividly indeed. Richard had seen both the opportunity and the advantage of strengthening the bond with Ireland. It had been one of the advantages of the true monarchy which he established, and of its ability to act with rapidity and a clear object, that he had twice crossed the sea which his predecessors had not passed for centuries. Had not the traditions of a long minority and the recalcitrance of wealthy taxpayers proved too strong for him, he might have founded a stable connection with the whole island, for he was statesmanlike, careful, and sympathetic in his dealings with the exceedingly complicated triple problem of the small English Pale, the Anglo-Irish but Gaelic-speaking lordships, and the native kingdoms. As it was, the statesmanlike effort was wasted. Richard's Lancastrian successors abandoned Ireland, and the English influence shrank under their nominal rule to limits never yet reached. If it be true that Ireland benefited by a period of independent prosperity, and that her native culture regained its influence, it is also true that the two islands are inevitably connected, and that mere abandonment of relations through the weakness of English Governments is no settlement of their relations. Henry of Bolingbroke and his son shirked the whole affair; or, rather, their insecurity and dependence on their powerful subjects forbade them sound policy. The dynasty was compelled to foreign adventure which, after a very few years of success, ended in ruin beyond the sea, followed by half a lifetime of bloodshedding and anarchy at home. Not till after Bosworth, at the very end of the century, did the connection with Ireland re-arise, and then it was too late. For by that time we are on the eve of the Reformation, and the fixed enmity of two nations which might, but for the "Lancastrian Experiment," have made one diverse but contented realm. The attitude of the Henries to Ireland—that test of English statesmanship—is among the worst of their errors.

As for the man himself who had begun the affair, he was as unfortunate as his reign.

In the first days of the new year, 1400, there failed a sharp rising of those very men who had been so leniently treated in the decisions of Richard, the Lords who had denounced Gloucester years before. They tried to seize the new king; they were betrayed by that same Albemarle (the Duke of York's son—now called Rutland, again), who betrayed everybody in turn; they fled to the west and were destroyed. Early rebellion against Henry IV in 1400.

The most obvious thing for Henry of Lancaster to do in this quite unstable position of these first days (he never became really stable even towards the very end of his life, for no one agreed that he had a true title) was to make a foreign expedition which would take the nobles with him in arms, and might, he hoped, give him prestige. But the difficulty was that such an expedition must not be too expensive. There could be no question yet of his attempting it overseas.

He directed it against Scotland. He levied no general taxes for it save a tithe from the clergy. But he raised forced loans from the wealthy: his own hypocritical grievance against Richard just before. On the 9th June, 1400, he, at York, summoned the tenants of the Crown for concentration on the Tyne. Upon August 6th he summoned King Robert of Scotland and the Scottish barons to do him homage at Edinburgh. He marched thither—the very large English forces could always march through the southern part of Scotland—but, like a dozen other expeditions before it, this expedition failed in provisions and returned. March into Scotland: summer, 1400.

It was the first of a series of failures in which the strength of England wasted. Immediately upon it came the beginnings of the Welsh trouble, which harried the reign continually, drained it of money, and very nearly re-established the complete independence of the principality. It is all part of what we have seen in the case of Ireland—the dwindling of

English power under a doubtful Crown. The attitude of the new régime towards what was called by contemporaries, "Lollardy," is significant rather of what was happening to society as a whole than of Henry's weakness. But it is so marked a character of those first years of the new century that it must be clearly understood.

"Lollardy" was a cant-term used to deride those men who indulged in many various and even contradictory vagaries of religious emotion, having this in common: antagonism to the power of the clergy. It was a reaction produced by the many converging ailments of the official Church and the consequent loss of moral authority in the hierarchy; the French papacy; the succeeding great schism (now at its worst); the ignorance and insufficiency of the clergy following on the Black Death; the tolerated worldliness and personal corruption of certain members of the hierarchy; the excess of endowment for diminished numbers. One Lollard might deny the full doctrine of the Eucharist (the most frequent test), another might be more concerned with the sins of the clergy, another insisting on the right of any priest to absolve, and yet another denying sacramental absolution altogether. But all agreed in this: that a stand must be made against the Church, and all, therefore, tended to individual religious judgment, even those who were least concerned with religion and most with the chance of getting Church monies. Wycliffe was not their creator, though his name is associated with theirs. For, indeed, Wycliffe created nothing: not an idea in his huge heap of writing is original. No, the Lollards arose sporadically like mushrooms, in the congenial soil of shaken authority, moral evil, impoverishment, and public misery which opened in England the last century of the now stricken mediæval culture. The nickname the populace—with sharp instinct—had coined for these sectaries was excellent. A "Lollard" was one who would be forever "lolling," that is, droning and chanting psalms and hymns: an ordinary accompaniment to private

enthusiasm ; and the popular contempt for such eccentricity was raised to active dislike by the fact that the strength of the movement lay in the wealthy manorial lords and business men of the towns, who saw in it an opportunity for raiding church wealth, and therefore of relief from that standing anxiety of theirs, the duty of supporting the nation by taxation of their incomes.

The movement gathered strength from shortly before the death of Edward III to its maximum under Henry V—covering about fifty years, that is, the action of the generation most affected by the Black Death. Afterwards it died out, and in the later xvth century was but a memory. Henry's accession was the moment in which Lollardy had become sufficiently menacing to necessitate public action. Richard II had been accused by his enemies and their scribes of tolerating it and even fostering it, because many of the wealthier in his own court were suspect. But his hesitation to act came not from favour ; rather from the immaturity of the movement. Henry's official move was not, in the main, a bargain with Archbishop Arundel (who had put him on the throne), nor a sop to the clerical organisation. It was rather a necessity of the time if the social structure was to be preserved. With the papal power almost in abeyance, and the local Church and State left to their own means of salvation, new laws to restrain the evil were inevitable, and Richard, had he reigned on, would have promulgated them as much as Henry. As it was, in the crisis of a feared Lollard rising, the clergy—with the Lords and Commons—petitioned (in 1401), the Crown accepted and decreed, a new formal law authorising burning for heresy. It was the common punishment in Western Europe, especially since the great Albigensian assault upon our civilisation ; but in England hardly known, precisely because heresy had in England been hitherto hardly known. Yet it should be noted that already, before the statute was issued (March 11th, 1401), an obscure priest, one Sawtre, had been burned for

heresy (on March 2nd) *under the Common Law of England*. There was therefore no actual need for new legislation, which did but emphasise an existing legal right; and, in point of fact, the law was very sparingly used.

To return to the reign: Henry further lost heavily in prestige by failing completely in Wales. The only thing (and that was, again, in connection with Scotland) that did have effect in his favour came, not from his own hands but from the Percies, whose power in the North he dreaded the more because they had joined with him in the recent crime of deposing Richard, and even helped in the sequestration and presumable murder of their king.

Alarm at news that Richard is alive in Scotland: 1402.

It was in the year 1402 that the Percies—the father, the Earl of Northumberland and Hotspur, the heir and son—to that half-royal border power—sent news that King Robert of Scotland professed to hold King Richard still alive. There were violent alarms, loud proclamations, arbitrary execution of many supposed to favour Richard's cause (including some of the Franciscans), the barbarous quartering of the chamberlain of Richard—though he had surrendered and helped the king to knowledge of the new conspiracy, then fear on the part of the king lest he had gone too far.

All through the affair the new king came out badly. He was saved by a sharp victory which the Percies won, without his help (and largely through the defection of one of the great Scots nobles), at Homildon Hill,[1] on the 14th September, 1402.

Homildon Hill, September 14th, 1402.

All this made the Percies stronger and stronger, and Henry weaker and weaker, when his rickety throne was saved by a happy chance.

It happened thus.

Owen Glendower, the Welsh prince against whom Henry had failed so ignominiously, raided beyond the border in early 1402, before Homildon Hill was fought in the north. The border levies were raised under Sir Edmund Mortimer

[1] The French traditions of the governing class make it "Homildon": perhaps the true English was "Humbledon."

(the uncle and natural guardian of the true king, the little Earl of March, whom Henry kept a prisoner, and himself next in succession to the throne). Edmund Mortimer was thus acting because the Mortimer family was the chief of the lords of the Welsh Marches. But Glendower, who already called himself a monarch (he had captured the Castle of Conway and taken Henry's garrison there the year before) defeated him heavily and took him prisoner—June 17th, 1402.[1] Now Mortimer was the brother-in-law of young Percy Hotspur, and, whether with genuine motive or as a pretext, the Percies summoned the king to pay Mortimer's ransom—they also claimed monies that had not been paid them (they said) for services rendered—notably in the earlier Welsh war.

The Percies quarrel with Henry.

Henry had already lost position in the face of his doubtful subjects by one unsuccessful campaign after the other. The king's son, the future Henry V, though still but a boy (he was only thirteen when the first attack on Wales was made and not sixteen when the third failed), served his apprenticeship to arms in those hills. For three years the successive marches into the mountains had returned without effect; and now, when the Percies asked that Mortimer should be released by the king's payment of his ransom, there was dangerous disaffection everywhere, even in the garrisons of Henry's own castles.

But it did not suit Henry that any strong advocate of the true heir should be at large, let alone his guardian, and, still worse, the next male (before Henry himself) in rightful succession to the throne. So he refused to ransom Edmund. Meanwhile the Percies had a further grievance: that the costs of their great victory over the Scots at Homildon Hill

[1] It was in the gap between two hills, just as one gets into Wales out of Herefordshire, on the road from Presteign westward into the wilds of Radnorshire: in the defile of Pilleth where the river Lugg runs in a narrow between the hills called Bryn Glas to the north, Llan Fawr to the south. It still has mounds marking old battles. It is a gate of Wales.

had not been refunded to them, and, most of all, I think, they saw that in Henry's unpopular and perilous position they had a chance of changing things round again to their own advantage, and setting the true heir, the Earl of March, upon the throne.

They put up as a blind another expedition against Scotland. Henry was deceived by it, and in June, 1403, he was ready to march north to join that supposed northern war, also hoping by this array to overawe the Percies.

Henry Percy makes war, June-July, 1403.

While he was thus preparing, deceived, the younger Percy, son and heir of Northumberland (Henry Percy, whom they called "Hotspur"), had made his plan.

He proposed to make a very rapid dash from his ancestral lands in the north-east of England, down upon the Dee, and so to the Severn. There to effect his junction with Glendower and between them to advance with a great combined force against the king. Politically, there was much in favour of the scheme. During the preceding winter (Christmas, 1402, and New Year, 1403) Mortimer had made handsome terms with his captor Glendower. He had married Glendower's sister, and proposed, with that alliance, to overthrow Henry. He called Glendower "Prince of Wales," and had a programme to restore King Richard, "if he were alive;" [1] if not, to put his own little nephew, the other Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, on the throne. Percy knew all this, and was making his arrangements just as Glendower was taking one castle after another from Henry's garrisons in Wales—and it is significant of the Lancastrian unpopularity that not a few of them were handed over by their governors.

By July 6th Henry Percy had started with a small

[1] Every one who counted knew by this time that Richard had been murdered and no one better than the Percies, who had been chief actors in Henry's usurpation, and who, moreover, now further hear of the French king's envoy, Creton, having seen the pretender in Scotland and discovered him not to be Richard—whom he had known well. But it paid to pretend that Richard *might* be alive, on account of the widespread personal loyalty he had aroused.

THE USURPATION OF HENRY OF LANCASTER. THE CAMPAIGN OF SHREWSBURY

company, and was marching right down across England, south and west, having with him his uncle the Earl of Worcester, and making for Chester —where Richard had strong adherence—" to fight for King Richard who is still alive "—but once in force intending to upset Henry, to proclaim the young Earl of March, and after that make what settlement might be made to the financial advantage of the Percy family.

Henry, on his side, did a fine piece of counter marching. He was already in Northamptonshire on the way north to Scotland with his army upon July 10th, and heard on the next day, at Lichfield, of Percy's move. But Percy had already reached Chester two days before. On the 17th July, while Hotspur was coming down from Chester towards the Severn valley, raising his force continually, Henry added to his army all the local levies he could muster in forty-eight hours, turned the head of his column west, and reached Shrewsbury by the 20th July, just in time to prevent its occupation by his enemy. Hotspur withdrew to a position about two miles north of the town. The thing had gone with lightning speed on Henry's side. It was the most intelligent of his episodes. He guessed the intention of a junction between Percy and Glendower, and marched directly to intercept it. Luckily for him, Glendower was still in South Wales, and it was now too late for him to join Hotspur. The Percy, thus left single-handed, may have had some 14,000 men, but, of course, only a fraction fully armed and trained. The king a somewhat larger force.

Battle of Shrewsbury and death of Hotspur, July 31st, 1403.

The action was joined on the next day, July 21st. It was exceedingly violent, and still quite undecided when a chance arrow killed the Percy, and the body of retainers with him were thereby put out of heart. That one accident in one moment decided on that day the new Lancastrian throne, and gave it nearly fifty years of endurance. The struggle had lasted but three hours. In that space of time Henry the king lost more than a third of his men, but his opponents the whole of their force as a fighting body. This fight in front

of Shrewsbury[1] was a turning-point. Though Henry was never secure, the odds henceforth remained in his favour.

What would have happened had the Percy triumphed and survived? He was of Henry's age and healthy—which Henry was not—and he was the better soldier. He had legitimacy on his side. All England would have risen. But his withered head decayed under the summer sun, spiked above the gate of York. In the South, profiting by such internal confusion, the French were raiding the coast, harrying the Channel, sacking Plymouth. But the decisive battle had gone for Lancaster.

Henry had further luck. The Duke of York's sister, the Despenser's widow, attempted early in 1405 to get into her power the boy who was the rightful king, the Earl of March, by a sudden stroke against Windsor. She failed, and just afterwards the young son of King Robert of Scotland—James Stuart, fourteen years old—was captured (by no sort of right) as he sailed down past the Yorkshire coast upon his way to France, and Henry held him in Pevensey Castle, making this hostage a sort of set-off to the false Richard, who was still kept by the Crown of Scotland as a menace in Stirling. King Robert of Scotland died within a year (in March, 1406), and the King of England thus held young James, now King of Scotland, as a hostage.

The young King of Scotland captured, 1405-1406.

These were the years in which Henry abased himself most meanly before the Parliament, consented to their control of his domestic life, humbled himself ridiculously in his crying need for money from the richer classes. But he saved his throne, even against further dangers.

In this same year, 1405, Scrope, the Archbishop of York, an aged man, holy, respected, and loved by all, and one who had always solemnly proclaimed and publicly the right of Richard and his true heir after him, was murdered because

Murder of Scrope, 1405.

[1] It seems to have taken place about 2½ miles north by east of the town: to the immediate west of the Whitchurch Road, just before you get to the fork in the road still called "Battlefield."

a northern gathering which he approved, but which led to no fighting, had alarmed the king. The archbishop had no intention of dethroning Henry. His manifesto was wholly for reform, and it is proof of how intense the feeling against Lancaster must have been that such a man should go even so far. But Henry was in a panic. Scrope was caught by treachery, seized during a parley: wherein Henry's commander Westmorland, pretended friendship and sympathy. Henry had asked his Chief Justice (Gascoigne) to condemn the old man as a traitor, and Gascoigne had refused because the archbishop had a right to be tried by his peers. Failing an arranged judicial action, Henry had that great prelate beheaded without form of law in his own manor of Bishopsthorn. His tomb at once became a shrine of prayer and miracle. The whole thing is a fine example of the distance traversed since the strong united papal power of earlier generations. All that the debased Papacy of the schism demanded as reparation after this killing of the second ecclesiastic in England (and the most revered) was an apology to that one of the rival Popes whom Henry chose to obey! Contrast this episode with that of St. Thomas à Becket, and you have the gulf between the true Middle Ages and their decay.

The last effort at casting the Usurper off the throne by force came to nothing in 1408. Northumberland, who since the death of his son before Shrewsbury had been in exile, came back and rallied an absurdly insufficient and untrained force of his own people—who had always followed him. The royal army met it on the 18th February, 1408, upon Bramham Moor, near Tadcaster. Northumberland was killed, and the force which thus challenged Henry destroyed.

Battle of Bramham Moor, 1408.

Wales, indeed, though the younger Henry continued to do hard work therein, and though the French forces sent by the French king to help the mountaineers had retired, was never quite completely held. But one may say that by 1409

Henry now (1408) more secure.

there was no exterior force from Scotland or from Wales, nor any force within from the rebellion of any great military leader, which could seriously threaten the remaining years of Henry's life—and of these there were to be but four.

They were filled with the beginning of civil war in France, which was to give a great opportunity to the new dynasty, and to make famous the succeeding reign of Henry of Lancaster's son : the reign of the younger Henry, Henry V : the reign of Agincourt.

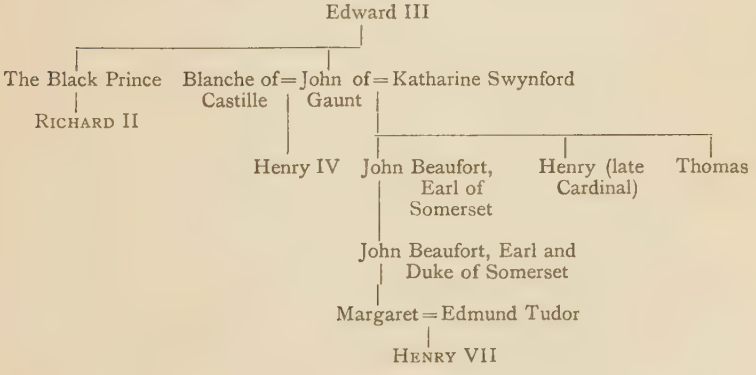
Beginning of French Civil War gives Lancastrian opportunity abroad.

The opportunity was based upon the intermittent madness and increasing weakness of the French king, Charles VI, who was dragging out a life still to be extended for many years in an impotence of will and the wretched prey of murderous factions.

But before we turn to the consequence of this and the sudden—though ephemeral—relief which it afforded to the usurping Lancastrians there are three incidents belonging to these years which deserve a special notice. The first is of great importance to the future troubles of England and to the claim of the Tudor dynasty.

It will be remembered that Richard II had in 1397—from generosity or policy—legitimised John of Gaunt's bastards by Katharine Swynford, the Beauforts : the half-brothers and sisters of the man who was to supplant and murder him.

Here is the lineage :—



Now in that original patent only general terms were used. Probably it occurred to no one that there could ever be a claim to the throne in this base blood, and, anyhow, there was the probability of Richard having an heir when his affianced wife was grown up. There was also the Earl of March, his brother, his little son—all then alive and healthy, in direct succession—and after them all John of Gaunt's legitimate sons and daughters—a whole swarm: altogether, with *their* children, something like a score of legitimate lives in due degrees of succession to the Crown. But quite apart from that there could never have been any question of the bastard branch inheriting. It was legitimised as a gracious social act, but with no idea of rendering it "Blood Royal." Indeed, the precaution had been taken in Richard's original draft to interline the words, "*salva dignitate regali*," which formally barred all idea of succession, but they were forgotten in the draft laid before his Parliament. Perhaps the original patents were felt to be of more value than copies made out for Lords and Commons.

Anyhow, the position stood thus when Henry IV went out of his way to emphasise and underline the total cutting off of his half-brothers from all possibility of succession—and thought, no doubt, to have settled the business for good. He was himself an expert in false dealing with legitimate rights, and had none of the candour of Richard. He would run no risk of some Beaufort in the distant future contesting the claim of a true heir or heiress of his, even though, or through, a woman—and his illnesses were beginning.

Henry, therefore, in early February, 1407, was at the pains of confirming Richard's patent of legitimacy, but, this time adding the clause "*salva dignitate regali*" in public and open form. Henceforward there could be no question of claiming the English throne through or by a Beaufort, even were Henry IV's title admitted.

The next two points are both concerned with the clerical

position of the time—the chaotic time of the great schism—and both belong to the year 1410.

The legend of a demand for disendowment in 1410.

There attaches to that year a statement which has been repeated over and over again in our text-books. It is the statement that in the Parliament of this year, 1410, the Commons unanimously petitioned the Crown to confiscate the whole of Church property. On the face of it the story is ridiculous. But it was not seen to be ridiculous by such writers as think the Reformation a national movement; and cannot understand their ancestry of the Middle Ages, because they have forgotten the very nature of the Catholic Church. A doubtful statement appears in one old document. It is copied somewhat later. Then it is repeated over and over again with misrepresentation. The misrepresentation is flattering to a particular official theory of history. It takes root and becomes accepted. That is the story of a hundred absurdities on Catholic England, and it is the story of this particular piece of nonsense.

It is true, of course, that confiscation of *part* of the excessive clerical endowments for public purposes had been suggested time and again since the Black Death—and, once, a year's value of endowments (the equivalent of papal annates) had been suggested as a tax in a moment of crisis, but this monstrous story of a proposed total confiscation, which is so quietly accepted, is quite another matter.

What really happened?

Let us look into the evidence.

We note in the first place that there is no mention of any such thing in the rolls of Parliament. Next we remark that the only contemporary mention of it is from one pen, that of Walsingham. Let us see what is actually there set down. It is the writing of a man who evidently knows the Commons for what they then were—not at all what they became centuries later. The Commons of Walsingham's time formed an intermittent advisory meeting, supplementary only to the permanent power of the king and the magnates about

him. It was theirs to petition the Crown, to make solemn registration of edicts, but their main purpose was the voting of exceptional aids, that is, of assenting to what were by now perpetually recurrent, but still (in the eyes of the grantors) *exceptional* levies of money in times of stress—for the Crown was still supposed to have a regular feudal income sufficient enough to carry on normally, save for war or other accident, whether Parliament met and voted extra supplies or not. This man, dealing with a body, important, indeed, but not at all the constitutional instrument which it grew to become more than two centuries later, quotes with exaggerated disapproval a violent attack upon the clerical order (with which order he naturally sympathised); he is equally naturally indignant against the very existence of those who make such a proposal. But what was that proposal? Here it is, translated as literally as I can translate it :—

"The King could get *out of* the temporalities of Bishops, Abbots, and Powers, occupied and proudly wasted throughout the realm, fifteen earls, six commissioners of office, fifteen hundred noble and armed knights (Milites), six thousand squires and the foundation of a hundred hostels over and above what he now has [of revenue]."

This he puts into the mouth of certain Commons who call themselves *Omnes communes*, which may be translated, "All we of the Commons" and need not mean—here cannot mean—"all the Commons" but rather "all of us thus petitioning are of the Commons." The king refuses to listen to such demands. The chronicler calls the petitioners "an execrable Lollard herd."

It should be evident upon the face of it that, whatever an extreme group might propose, an early XVth century body of men, of large numbers and responsible for their advice, could no more have intended the complete spoliation of the Church than an early XXth century official body of similar size and official importance could really intend the spoliation of the banks.

It is equally obvious that though the people returned from the shires and the boroughs must have been a very mixed sort, with many Lollards amongst them, in the excitement of the moment, we may say this with absolute certitude—no majority would have been Lollard. Why, it is the House of Commons as a body which repeatedly denounces the Lollards, which calls them "a wicked sect," and on the petition of which the king orders them to be burned! On the other hand, there was certainly a Lollard body in the Commons as there were Lollards scattered throughout the gentry at the moment, and among the burgesses of the towns. The only natural interpretation to put upon this brief and extraordinary passage is to say that some extreme group, all taken from the Commons and calling themselves "all of us of the Commons," put forward a scheme for milking the exaggerated ecclesiastical revenues, and that, being extravagant, even this scheme was at once rejected. To read it as a solemn pronouncement of Parliament assembled, and as a demand for total confiscation, is sheer nonsense. If the Reformation had not triumphed in the XVIth century, we should hardly have heard of these twelve lines of manuscript upon which the whole story is founded.

Badby's execution: Lent of 1410.

Lastly, we ought to note in connection with Lollardy one case of the very rare executions which it provoked. A man whom Walsingham calls a "faber," a tailor named Badby of Evesham, had said of the Blessed Sacrament (in the West of England) that it was much more worthless than an animal, for it was but matter. He contemptuously denied the presence of anything divine therein. He was brought to London, condemned in the highest Ecclesiastical Court there (in the Lent of 1410), and condemned to be burned at Smithfield.

Upon this there followed a significant set of happenings. The young Prince of Wales—twenty-two years old—was present when the fire was lit. He was moved by the groans

of the unhappy man (whom he had tried to bring to recant before his sufferings), ordered him to be removed from the fire, and, when he had recovered, again urged him to recant, and even offered him a pension for life. But the obscure victim refused: he preferred the torture and the death. He was put back, the fire was re-lit, and he died.

Now that incident—though it is but an isolated one—conveys many lessons. See, in the first place, the domestic nature of the time and the popular nature of its kingship; the personal interference of the young heir to the throne; his personal conversation with the victim; something utterly different from the later dead convention of modern times, which removes the citizens an infinite distance away from the responsible Government and leaves them impotent. See, again, the attempt to save the victim, who has only to unsay what to his fellow citizens was an abomination, destructive of society, and he would not only be spared but set free and endowed. That is something quite different from our modern rule of sacrificing a man ruthlessly if he interferes with the machinery of the State. But, most of all, remark the tenacity of the martyr. For one who would thus hold out against such abominable suffering, how many men must there have been who were already questioning the traditional scheme of the Middle Ages? They were a very small minority, of course, just as the Communists are to-day a very small minority. Every one hated these fanatics; they were outlawed in opinion. But what we, who know the sequel, do well to emphasise is the intensity of their emotion. So strong was their hatred of the priesthood, and therefore of the sacramental idea, that in one extreme case a man will not only lay down his life, with the prospect of terrible suffering, for the denial of it, but will actually experience that suffering, and yet continue steadfast.

They did wrong to call the man a Lollard; he was far too extreme for that. To call him a Lollard would be like calling an ardent Communist "Socialist" or "Labour" to-

day ; but he was on the far Left Wing of a great movement which was disturbing society. That movement, as I have said, soon died down. There is no direct connection between it and the great religious upheaval which took place more than 100 years later ; but it is a vivid symbol and example of what was possible in the decline of the Middle Ages.

If to-day a man, in his protest against private property, were to burn down the house of some rich fellow ; if (which to our modern mechanical conception is inconceivable) he were offered remission of his punishment if he would but deny his Communist principles ; if he were subjected to a long term of imprisonment with all its horrors, and, on coming out of it he were promised a pension and immunity on condition of recanting his Communism ; if he were steadfastly to remain in it, and were to return voluntarily to the hell of our modern penal servitude—that would be a parallel. It is not true to say that these enthusiasts introduced the break-up of Christendom which was to follow a century later ; but it is true to say that the mere existence of such fanatics, even as isolated and vastly unpopular individuals, was a proof of how the officials of the Church were already losing (through their own fault) their old unquestioned position.

From this striking particular instance of the Lollard ferment, let me return to survey the singular opportunity for a foreign diversion which was afforded to the insecure Lancastrian house.

In 1400, when the English usurpation took place, Charles VI, King of France (grandson of John, the king captured at Poitiers), was intermittently mad. His wife, a German princess (Isabella of Bavaria) was of the vilest sort, incapable at government, but so capable of wantonness that her own later and cynical ascription of bastardy to her youngest son is credible. With the great Capetian monarchy fallen into such hands, and with the princes too young to rule, two relatives of the king competed for the real power and for the control of the Crown. One was Philip the Brave,

who had stood and fought beside his father, John, at Poitiers, when he was but a boy. He had been given as an appanage Burgundy, and made Duke thereof. He had acquired Flanders by a marriage, and was thus a powerful monarch with a large territory, partly vassal to the French Crown, but forming for him a virtually independent taxing area and recruiting ground. The other was his nephew, the Duke of Orleans. Philip, Duke of Burgundy, died in 1404, and was succeeded by his son, John the Fearless. Orleans seized power through his influence with the queen. John marched on Paris next year, 1405, got possession of the king and the heir (then only nine years old), Orleans giving way. There was a pretended peace between the two men, arranged in the September of that year. But they watched each other, and the kingdom was in jeopardy.

During the first part of Henry's reign this situation in the French monarchy had been of no advantage to him, while the Duke of Orleans (whose wife was a half-sister of Richard II) still controlled the French policy, and directed it with vigour against the Lancastrians. The French ships harried the Channel, burned Henry's ports: French government so directed was the permanent and active enemy of any settlement with the new rule in England. The son of the Duke of Orleans had married Isabella of France, the nominal widow of Richard II, and there was between this young man, with his father Orleans, and Henry IV as violent an enmity as could be. Isabella's dowry had not been returned with her, and that embittered the quarrel.

The murder of the Duke of Orleans, November, 1407.

But here, also, Henry of Bolingbroke had good fortune: the sort of good fortune that attends the first acts of cunning, but often ruins its issue at last. On the 23rd of November, 1407, Orleans was murdered by the faction competing for control of the nerveless King of France: the faction of the Duke of Burgundy. Orleans left a young lad to inherit his name and the blood-feud.

Henceforward the Armagnacs (the general name of the

supporters of Orleans, taken from his father-in-law, Count of Armagnac, a great soldier and natural leader of the party) and the Burgundians, the party of the Duke of Burgundy, were to wage such a civil war in France as to leave open to the dynasty of Lancaster the one chance it had of affirming its throne : a successful foreign campaign.

First Lancastrian interference on the continent, A.D. 1411.

Such a war Henry did not himself wage on any considerable scale, but he began to use his opportunity. When the Armagnacs were besieging Paris in 1411 (to get hold of King Charles, whom the Burgundians controlled within the city), the King of England sent over a small contingent of archers and lances—some 2000 men—to help the Burgundian resistance, because it was for the moment the weaker side. The very next year the bidding for his alliance became strong, and the King of England thought it now worth his while to support the other side, who promised, as the price of his aid, to recognise the old Plantagenet claim to lower Aquitaine, and even, later, to Poitou ; the train which ended in the coronation of Henry IV's grandson at Paris was laid.

But it was too late for Henry IV himself to follow up that chance. He was failing.

His body had always been weak. He had latterly broken down physically altogether. Even as early as the murder of the Archbishop of York in 1405, seven years before, he had been covered with a loathsome eruption which the populace, who have too much tradition to despise such omens, put down to his sacrilegious perjury and regicide and killing of the venerated Scrope. And now he had come to his end. One epileptic fit followed another (he was only in his forty-sixth year). The last seized him in the early spring of 1413, as he was praying hopelessly at the shrine of St. Edward in Westminster Abbey. His superstition—perhaps due to his evil deeds—that he had been supported by Heaven, since at least Heaven had given him success, was no longer a strength to him.

Henry falls into epilepsy, early 1413.

They bore him out towards the monastery (and as they

and dies, March 20th, 1413.

did so the southern men must have genuflected as they passed the Sacrament, while the northern men wondered at the custom), they took him to the abbot's chamber, and there he died, on the 20th March, 1413.

. . . . . .

Social and political consequences of the usurpation.

All that short reign of usurpation can, as I have said, be expressed in terms of the weakness of Henry IV's title: the fact that he had broken the true succession to the Crown. But though that was the cause, the effects had consequences not connected with it, and covering all the subsequent history of England.

Henry had to rely upon purchased help where a man with a sound title would have commanded moral adhesion. He had to give the official Church undisputed power.

Much more important than the close alliance with the official Church (which, after all, would always have had much the same power, though perhaps a little more restrained under a legitimate king) was the confirming of the rapidly growing power of the lesser gentry. This is the moment from which the natural predominance of this class in the petty justice of the country districts becomes defined, and the institution of the Justice of the Peace is found. It is under Henry IV that the same class in their character of Knights of the Shire in the Commons is deferred to, and that the lower House acquires certain set privileges, as, for instance, the solemn affirmation in the first year of the reign that the assent of the Commons is required by the king to a statute, and that entry of record should be made in the presence of a deputation from themselves as well as from the Lords. This strengthening of the squires and the merchants in the House of Commons came also from the usurper's perpetual requirements in money. In that short time of thirteen odd years, between late 1399 and early 1413, he had had eight grants of a "tenth" of moveables and eight of a "fifteenth," and though the Commons' definite demand that

a favourable answer to petition should come before supply failed to be accepted, yet, as the reign went on, supply was appropriated and watched, not only by the magnates but by deputations from the squires and merchants of the Lower House.

It is an exaggeration to ascribe *all* this tendency to increase the power of the squires to the weakness of Henry's throne. It would be a still greater mistake to say that the strong aristocratic quality of the English State, which was to be the mark of England till yesterday, came originally from the Lancastrian usurpation: it was due to the Reformation. But it is true that the usurpation strengthened the mass of that large wealthy class which comes below the very wealthiest, and correspondingly weakened the populace. It is true that if there had been no Lancastrian usurpation a firm tradition of strong monarchy based upon popular support might have become unassailable in England within a hundred years, and that the Lancastrian usurpation, taking place when it did, the chances of such a monarchy surviving to modern times were weakened.

Henry V

(March 19th, 1413, to August 31st, 1422—not quite 9½ Years)

The second in the usurping Lancastrian line was a young but experienced man well advanced in his twenty-sixth year,[1] when his father died: experienced in war, for he had continually fought and led in the Welsh expeditions since his sixteenth year; experienced in government, for he had mixed, and often led, therein since his eighteenth. He inherited the bad blood and the weak constitution which must have come in through John of Gaunt's first wife (for the Beauforts, Katharine Swynford's bastards, were tough enough), which broke down his father so early in age, and which caused him himself to die just after the conclusion of his thirty-fifth year.

Character of Henry V.

On his mother's side (she died when he was seven) he may have had a better physical strain, for she was the last of the Bohuns. But in himself, and in his son who succeeded him, to the ruin of the family experiment, the physical weakness is present to the full. We must see him as he enters the field of full authority not in the picture of Shakespeare—which is great fiction—but as he was: with firm, thin lips compressed, close eyed; observant exceedingly; oddly devout—indeed, not quite sanely so, for he combined a profound sincere passion for the Faith and its full doctrine with an appalling contempt for truth. He had active intelligence, industry, high self-control, and one great talent, that

[1] He was born (at Monmouth, "Harry of Monmouth") on the 9th of August, 1487.

of the soldier. He exhibited a capacity in generalship much greater than ever his father, Henry IV, had shown; much more than his grandfather, John of Gaunt, who had invariably bungled military affairs; but conspicuous in his great-grandfather, Edward III, who, so long as he was competent to command at all, commanded well.

We have seen how early he had been introduced to field fighting. He was not sixteen when he took a heavy part in the battle where Hotspur died. He was wounded there, and he was always ready for military adventure. He also had a strong appetite for enforcing his will. He was governing, one may say, more than any other one person during his father's increasing illness during 1410, and he showed so much energy that we date from that period the stories—in which there must be some truth—of his desire to accede prematurely through his father's abdication. In the next year it was to him personally, it would seem, that Burgundy appealed for aid, and he seems also to have been the moving force of the expedition, such as it was, which went out from England in 1411: his father was more doubtful of the policy. Within little more than a year of his father's death his pressure upon the Council had become so strong as to provoke reaction, and he was compelled, or decided at the moment, to withdraw from it.[1]

But what is more worthy of attention even than the bad blood which heavily handicapped the usurping family, or even the undoubted tenacity and vigour of purpose which inhabited the spare, insufficient frame of this young leader, was the continued insecurity of the position he had inherited from his father.

The English people never really accepted the Lancastrian line, save in one passing moment of military success, which naturally moved their enthusiasm. They were haunted by the criminal origins of Lancastrian power, and could not at

[1] It is to this time that belongs the familiar story of his trying on the crown. It is not contemporary, I believe it is first found in Monstrelet, II, 338.

heart forgive its disregard of what they, and all their time, thought sacred. Perhaps their instinct told them—for the instinct of the crowd is often prophetic—that the Lancastrian policy, which had already strengthened the rich at their expense, would at last sacrifice the quiet of England; and, at long last, though unwilling, and as by accident, even the religion of the English. Hardly had Henry been crowned, after the briefest delay (on the 9th April, 1413, with a blizzard of snow raging round the Abbey), when we see again in several evidences the weakness of his tenure. He had to name the Earl of Arundel to the Treasury, in spite of dismissing that earl's uncle, the archbishop, from the Chancery. In other words, he had to compromise with strong personal opposition to him and his, for though the Earl of Arundel was not a disciple of his uncle, the clan was hostile. What is even more remarkable, he solemnly reinstated the dead Richard, exhuming his body from its neglected grave and giving it a splendid funeral in Westminster Abbey. It may be argued that in this he was not unmoved by gratitude to the man who had treated him so well as a boy, had chivalrously released him, when he might have been held as a hostage, and had always shown him kindness. It was also good statecraft to make solemn public advertisement of Richard's being out of the field. But there was more in it than that. It was to the young Lancastrian's advantage to satisfy (so cheaply !) the national loyalty, to emphasise kingship, and to show respect to the memory of a man whom a clique of wealthy rebels had violently dispossessed and murdered. Henry V, throughout his short life, showed in action all his father's secretive cunning, with more than his father's talents.

Henry is crowned, April 9th, 1413.

Stronger, however, by far than other proofs of how insecurely stood his throne was the great London rising which came immediately on his accession. Only martial law got the better of it, and if young Henry had been less of a soldier than he was, the Lancastrian spoil would have been snatched from his hands then and there.

John Oldcastle and the London rising, January 9th, 1414.

There was in those days a certain John Oldcastle, a gentleman of some birth, but one who had become much more important than anything to which he was born. For he had married (her fourth husband) that great heiress, the widow of Lord Cobham. He appears as "Monsieur Johan Old Castile" as early as 1401. He was summoned to the House of Lords in 1409, whilst the former king still reigned, and men often popularly called him Lord Cobham. He had led soldiers in the expedition of 1411. He counted in the State.

This man appeared at the head of a very formidable movement for dethroning Henry V. He partly used for that purpose (he was also perhaps sincerely attached to) the faction of the Lollards; but the great numbers he could suddenly raise were not so much witnesses to the extent of religious as of political disaffection. They remembered King Richard. Oldcastle had been arrested for heresy, imprisoned, given till November to recant, escaped, and early in the next year (January, 1414) summoned supporters from all sides, but mainly from London, to rendezvous at dusk and strike a blow by night for revolution. There was a vast gathering, some said of 100,000 people, in St. Giles' Fields, north of Charing Cross, a mile outside the walls of London. The young king acted with great resolution; he shut the gates and acted as though in a state of war, threatening all ingress and egress with immediate death.

The plot had been at first to capture young Henry at Eltham: but he had moved to Westminster. Hence the trysting near Charing Cross. We know little more than that. Who they would have put in his place we are not told, at least with any certitude; though it is true there was still —in spite of the public funeral in the Abbey—popular talk of Richard surviving in Scotland. But what is of interest in the matter, apart from Henry's immediate victory after a very bad few days of peril, is the examination of Oldcastle rather as a heretic than as a rebel. It gives a very clear

insight into the turbulence which rose so high at this moment in spiritual matters. The man had a confused respect for the authority of the Church, but he denied the right of prelates, let alone of popes, to decide doctrinal matters; making of the Church, apparently, a sort of abstraction, present only in the individual heretic's mind. He spoke for a great many in this movement who were essentially anti-sacerdotal. For instance, he—whose sole claim to position was wealth—ascribed the doctrine of the Real Presence to the Churches having been corrupted through wealth. He denied the power of priestly absolution, though he thought confession salutary enough; what is more, he refused absolution himself when in great peril. There is little doubt that he was sincere in these protests, and that he was not so much using the spiritual discontent of some against a dynasty unpopular with many more, as mixing the two things together. He was working the sporadic and vague Lollard feeling of comparatively few as a yeast for leavening of the old loyalty to the true king. It should also be noticed (though by this time it was becoming a commonplace) that the documents of his trial had to be put before him in the new English tongue for his greater convenience. Here was one born a gentleman, married into very great wealth, summoned as a peer, in a position to lead a great movement; such a man a lifetime before would have been not only French-speaking, but probably unable to understand the dialects of his inferior dependants, his servants, and his husbandmen. Now, in the early XVth century, such a man was wholly English-speaking, that is, thinking, and only able to carry on negotiations easily, in the newly formed conglomerate tongue which was to go forward to such splendid destinies.

In point of fact, Oldcastle escaped again to Hereford, his native place (though his wife's lands were Kentish). There he lay in hiding; the stroke had failed. But the danger had been very great, and it is difficult not to conclude that this

sharp passage against the London rising with its Lollard nucleus was the cause of the king's determining on that foreign war which led to so great and unexpected a success—though later to the ruin of the dynasty.

By the middle of February, 1414, the danger was quite over, the chief insurgents had been executed—nearly all of them, be it noted, as traitors; only seven as heretics—and shortly after Parliament (at Leicester) registered their defeat. The law against such spiritual and political insurrection was made more vigorous, the dynasty was strengthened by the formal act making the king's two brothers, John and Humphrey, Dukes of Bedford and Gloucester, and young Henry could breathe again. But the incident was enough to make him more certain than ever that the diversion of foreign war would be necessary to his throne.

Nor was he only thus moving. It seems clear that the higher clergy were principals in the suggestion of foreign war, and that Oldcastle's rising had led them to such a diversion, for they had noted in it that discontent with the disproportionate endowment of the Church which is a note of more than a lifetime after the Black Death.

The short reign of Henry V has the main part of its interest concentrated in this policy of securing the Lancastrian usurpation by a foreign adventure, and the surprising success of that adventure, which for a moment realised in the long-nourished, underlying vision of the Western Middle Ages—the creation of an Anglo-French State.

The interest of the reign lies in its success abroad.

It is the nine years' reign of a young man weak, as we have seen, in physical health, pale, acute in character as in features, cruel, deep in policy, and—as I have said—a most talented soldier, delighting to use his genius in the soldier's trade. For such talents and such a political necessity a combination of affairs in France offered a rare opportunity.

That opportunity he took, and it floated him on, to his own astonishment, until he reached more than ever he had dreamed he could reach. His imperfect body died in the

height of his success. The thing which his mind had planned and accomplished was destroyed before the time to which, had he been of normal strength, he would have survived. He died at thirty-five, in the height of his triumph. When barely forty he would have seen the first omens of its ruin.

The circumstances in France tempting Henry and the magnates—especially the clerical ones—to act were an accentuation of these which we saw at work in his father's time. The imbecile monarchy was struggled for by two violently opposing forces. Only one was domestic; the other, Burgundy, was now almost a foreign power, though of Capetian blood, French-speaking for the most part, and vassal to the Crown. It was this fear of a strong rival territorial power capturing the national government which made the struggle so bitter. French feudal society, no longer really feudal, was like a wall in which a great crack had appeared, into which any determined man with the means to his hand could strike a wedge. On May 31st, 1414, young Henry V despatched his ambassadors; on July 10th, 1414, these envoys of his—he had already, in 1413, negotiated for a marriage with the King of France's daughter, Catherine—finally presented the ancient claim of the Plantagenets to the Crown of France.

We must not too quickly conclude that the pretext was insignificant. It was based on the old claim of Edward III through his mother Isabella, which had, as was seen in my last volume, a solid foundation. Time and the loss of Edward's conquests, had weakened the tradition, but had not made it worthless. As late as Richard's mid-reign—say up to the stroke of 1387—there remained a strong memory of the great victories abroad, and a corresponding bitterness at their shameful sequel. Young men and lads who had fought at Poitiers were but middle-aged, and the long reduction of fortress after fortress by the French reconquest had gone on till within such short memory as is ours, to-day, of the days before the Great War. When Henry V put forward

in 1414—tentatively indeed, and only as a matter of policy, subject to change—this claim to the Plantagenet fiefs there were men still living who, in their twenties, had been younger attendants upon the Black Prince. General opinion in England had never wholly abandoned the idea of rule in the old Plantagenet dominions oversea. Moreover, though Henry's military plan, when, next year, he developed it, turned out to be in the main a raid through France, with success based on rapidity, then a return to England in glory, and with loot, by a quick march back to Calais in the old fashion of a lifetime and more before, yet it had something more behind it. For it opened with the deliberate siege of Harfleur, for which the violent civil war in France gave ample time, and Harfleur was chosen, as we shall see, with an object clearly ulterior. It was not only a second port or " bridgehead " for landing in France, supplementary to Calais ; it meant also the command of the mouth of the Seine, that is, a block to Rouen and even to Paris. The original claim was, indeed, dropped, and the next month there was put forward another equally artificial excuse for the expedition, the demand that the Crown of France should cede to Henry in full sovereignty, not as fiefs, the old territory of the Angevins, Normandy, Anjou, and Maine. There was also some revival of the old claim for the arrears of ransom for the king captured at Poitiers.

Henry's final claim.

The ministers of the imbecile French king thought it worth while to talk seriously. The mortal division of their country urged them—for such division left them unable to resist, but perhaps also a stronger motive. Henry had again demanded, among other things, in his list of matters to have decided, a marriage with Catherine, the daughter of the French king, and an enormous dowry such as certainly the Government of Paris could never have paid. Yet they did admit that the marriage could take place, and offered a third of the dowry demanded ; they even discussed Henry's holding Aquitaine as a fief.

But the young Lancastrian meant not policy but war, and believed (rightly, as the future was to show beyond all his own expectations) that he would do enough abroad to rally support to his uncertain Crown at home. He called a Parliament, who gave him a very large grant indeed, something like what we should call a three shillings income tax. He sent at the end of the year 1414 a magnificent deputation to Paris, hardly intended to obtain a conclusion. The French Government continued to yield, even raising their offer for the dowry of the princess; but their concession was not accepted.

War determined on April, 1415.

On April 16th, 1415, Henry summoned a council in which there were nearly thirty lay peers, and more than half that number of spiritual, and said that he had determined to recover his inheritance. His young brother, the Duke of Bedford, was left regent, an army was raised which showed in its construction how far the dissolution of the old feudal system had gone.

Nature of the expeditionary force.

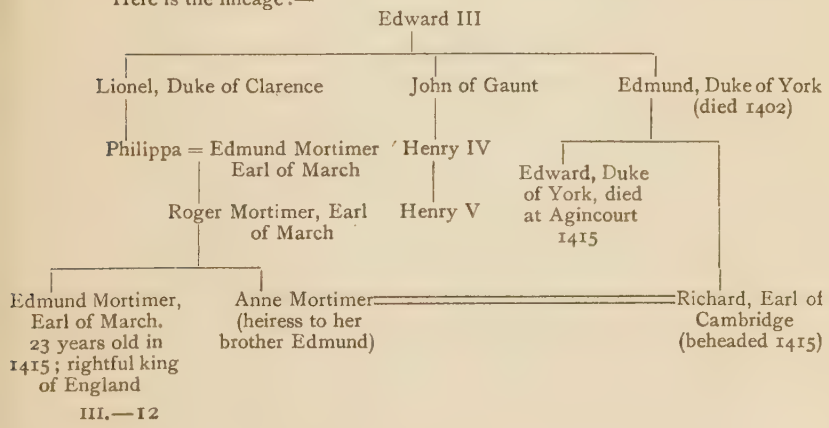
It was an army contracted for a whole year, regularly paid (every archer got three times the wage of an artisan), and working under a contract which even defined the details of the right of ransom for prisoners at the division of the booty. The king, already amply provided for, publicly raised money in all manner of means, approaching rich men privately, getting from them personal loans and—a point that should be remembered in our reading of the next century—dissolving certain monastic foundations of alien connection and confiscating their revenues to the Crown instead of apportioning them to other religious objects.

Even so, the faction in power at Paris thought that conflict could be avoided. They sent yet another deputation to England, in June, 1415, which came to Winchester; but the newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury (Arundel was dead) told them that Henry would accept nothing less than all the old Plantagenet inheritance in France. The futile negotiation was over before the beginning of July, and after

the middle of the month everything was ready for the expedition. At home, Scotland, the natural ally of the French Crown, could be kept quiet by the threat of releasing the young king James, whom Henry kept captive, and whose appearance north of the border was the last thing the Scots regent desired. Wales was no longer to be feared. Owen Glendower was old and a fugitive. The new policy of foreign war left English interests in Ireland more abandoned than ever, but the Lancastrians were indifferent to that. The army was concentrated at Southampton, and about to embark.

But even at that moment the incertitude of the Lancastrian throne, which had been the very cause of the war, showed itself again. A conspiracy against Henry was discovered: a conspiracy which would never have been possible had men believed him to be the rightful king: and the conspirators were very close within the king's own circle—his first cousin Richard,[1] who had been lately made Earl of Cambridge (brother to the Duke of York), and, among others, Lord Scrope, who was the king's own intimate companion. Richard, brother of the Duke of York, had, it must be noted, a motive. He had married Anne Mortimer, the sister of the young Earl of March, and in case that true claimant to the throne died without issue (he was twenty-three and

[1] Here is the lineage:—


Edward III
Lionel, Duke of Clarence
John of Gaunt
Edmund, Duke of York (died 1402)
Philippa = Edmund Mortimer Earl of March
Henry IV
Edward, Duke of York, died at Agincourt 1415
Roger Mortimer, Earl of March
Henry V
Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March. 23 years old in 1415; rightful king of England
Anne Mortimer (heiress to her brother Edmund)
Richard, Earl of Cambridge (beheaded 1415)

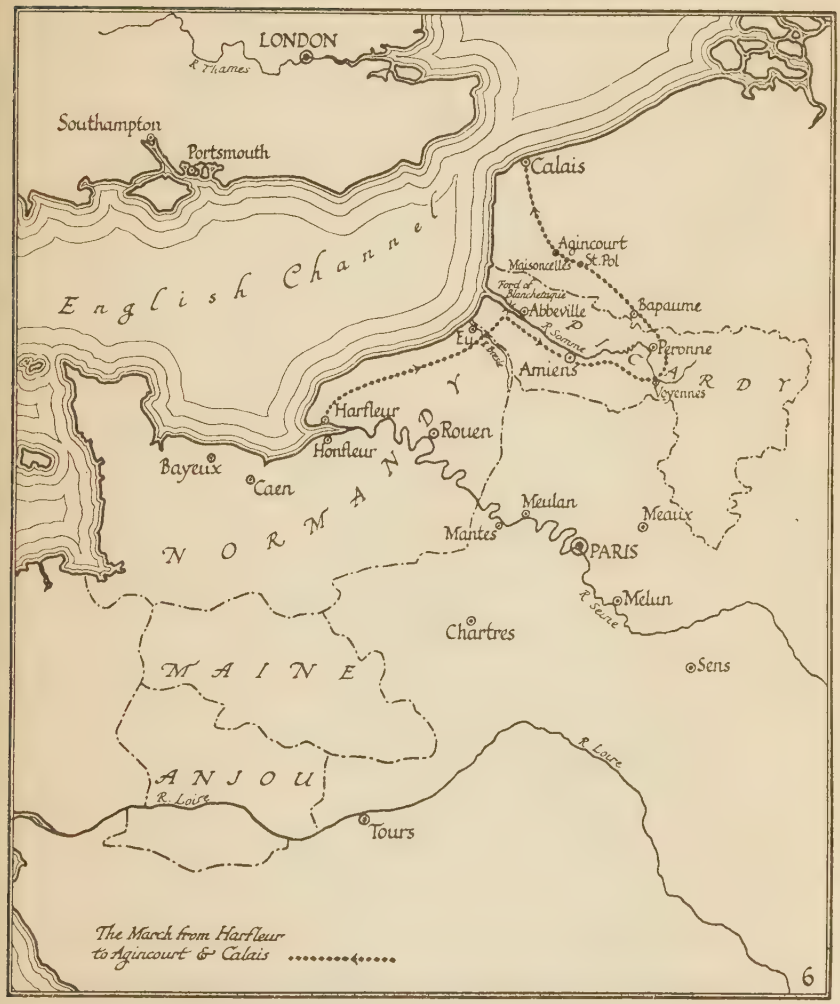
lately married), the sister would have the full Plantagenet claim to the Kingdom of England. At any rate, the rebellion, were it successful, would put young March on the throne and Cambridge would have been chief subject. The conspirators were put to death. Those who misunderstand the time have called the conspiracy futile and even incomprehensible. It was neither. Any movement against Henry (before Agincourt) had its chance. At the first success of the rebels (the capture, still more the death, of the king) a large rising was possible and probable.

Invasion of France, 1415.

On Saturday, August 10th, three days after the execution of the conspirators, Henry went on board ship, "The Trinity Royal," and in the afternoon of Sunday, August 11th, the whole fleet—a very large one [1]—was sailing past Portsmouth harbour under a north-west breeze. It carried an army of well over 30,000 men, with a strong siege train: 8000 fully armoured, mounted men (men at arms), 24,000 archers, and 1000 artificers and gunners.[2]

[1] The fleet had over 1000 craft all told, and of these, though most were small, some were without doubt very large. The size of vessels in the Middle Ages is usually greatly underestimated by academic writers partly through a confusion between our modern word "tonnage" and the uncertainly known mediæval measurements. We have record at this time of a ship built for Henry V in Bayonne measuring 156 feet from stern post to stem, with 40-ft beam. We have also contemporary record of four ships, the average crew required for each of which was a master and *sixty-three* mariners. Anyone who has sailed can see what that means.

[2] So the contemporary Chronicle. But, of course, we have on this point again the inevitable conflict between contemporary estimates given by those who could consult innumerable witnesses and who heard of the matter on every side, and the academic writer of our own day, 500 years after the event, belittling contemporaries on the strength of single, unsupported, often fragmentary and always ill-understood documents. By *only* using the extant lists one can argue in the teeth of common sense that Henry's army was but a third of its real size. So that a force of some 10,000 or 11,000 (1) required such a fleet to transport it; (2) could prevent a neighbouring force of 14,000 from attacking it (these were the numbers of the French force at Rouen watching the siege and unable to attack); (3) after losing at least a third of its strength by sickness and leaving a garrison in Honfleur strong enough to meet any attack, had enough left to march across France and fight Agincourt; (4) miraculously appeared to contemporaries to be *three* times the size it was!



THE CAMPAIGN OF HENRY V IN FRANCE

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, the 13th of August, the great fleet cast anchor in the mouth of the Seine between Honfleur and Harfleur—Honfleur upon the northern, Harfleur (which the English soldiers called "Harefleet") upon the southern, bank of the estuary.

Within the mouth of the river lies upon this northern shore a bay now dry at low water, and much of it reclaimed, and in the bight of this bay, sheltered from all wind and sea, was the landing then called "the key of the Caux country," or, in the French, "Clef de Caux;"[1] for the Caux country, or Pays de Caux, is all that chalky land of Normandy lying to the north and east of the Lower Seine. In the inmost recess of this little bay lay the fortified town of Harfleur, which, so far as a fortress could in those days, commanded all the navigation of the Seine at its mouth.

It was upon the next day, Wednesday, the 14th, that Henry landed at the Clef de Caux (of which the contemporary English account makes "Kydcaus"). Upon the Thursday, August 15th, he celebrated in splendour the Feast of the Assumption; the Friday was spent in arranging everything for the siege of Harfleur, and that siege formally opened upon the Saturday, the 17th of August; the king's own position being upon the heights of Cravile to the west of Harfleur, now a north-eastern suburb of Havre.

Capture of Harfleur.

Harfleur had no garrison save a scratch 400 men, and capitulated at the end of five weeks. It was garrisoned, most of its inhabitants turned out, and was to be held henceforward as a bridgehead across the Channel after the fashion of Calais. The whole thing was thought out; there was nothing haphazard about it. Henry had made a plan, and so far had carried it out. He now proposed just such a raid as his great-grandfather and his great-uncle had triumphantly executed in their day, and to get back through the North of France to Calais. He risked this adventure in spite of his

[1] There is an opinion that it might be (and that is probable) *Chef* de Caux: that is "head" of Caux.

military advisers, and he had the luck to be right. He had lost nearly a third of his men from death and sickness in the very hot weather, and others by wounds; he had also to leave a garrison for Harfleur. He took with him, therefore, for that inland march barely 11,000[1] armed men, and started out on the 8th October, eastward parallel with the coast, his men marching light, the packages on sumpters—and with only eight days' store of food—just enough to reach Calais by direct roads.

Henry starts on his march for Calais, October 8th, 1415.

I wish I had space to describe that very fine piece of marching: there was as yet no French concentration against the raiders. They covered sometimes nearly 20 miles in a day: an average of 15. They were followed and watched; they had the greatest difficulty in foraging; the adventure was imperilled at every stage. By Friday, 11th, the fourth day, they were across the Bresle into Picardy—after covering 65 miles (the garrison of Eu tried to intercept them but failed)—and there appeared once more in English history the strategic importance of the River Somme.

Henry had proposed to cross, as his great-grandfather had crossed, by the ford of Blanchetaque. It was too strongly held. He had to turn south and east, up the left bank of the river, seeking a crossing; but everywhere he found the bridges broken, and strong local levies, that waited to intercept him on the further side, watching the passages. The weather changed. Continual and heavy rain began to fall. By the evening of October 18th, before he was a full eleven days out from Harfleur, he was at that point in the Upper Somme valley where the Roman road crosses the stream at Voyenne, and so far from the centre of the French command to the east of the river, that they had not had time to guard the passage. The main French force had been out-marched and outflanked by this small English force, which must have suffered heavily from the weather.

[1] So the only contemporary eye-witness who was with the force.

The Somme crossed, October 19th, 1415.

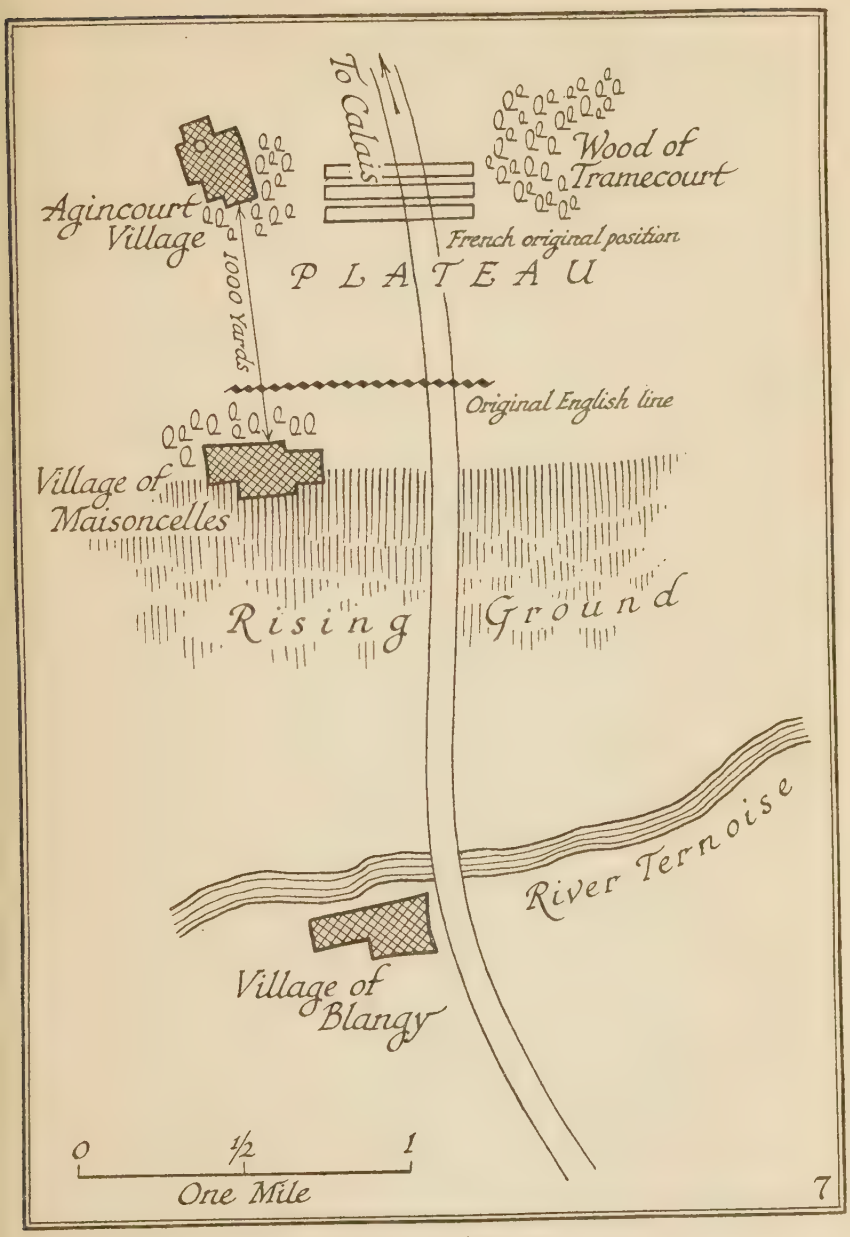
On October 19th the marshy and difficult river was crossed, and Henry's column camped, on the night between the Saturday and Sunday, October 19th and October 20th, on the right bank. The Constable of France fell back, concentrating his much larger forces, retreating first by Baupaume, then to St. Pol. Henry received, after the custom of the time, a challenge, and answered that the issue would be at God's will, and gave the French full warning that he was marching straight for Calais.

So did the little army march, knowing that it must at last be intercepted. They skirted Peronne to the east, keeping to the open country, and came to the little stream of the Ternoise by the evening of October 23rd. They managed to seize the bridge in time, just as the French were beginning to break it down, and all Henry's command got over to the further bank by evening.

His scouts, under the Duke of York, had discovered a large concentration in front of them, and for a moment they thought they might have to fight an evening battle ; but it was spared. They went on up the brow of the bank to Maisoncelles, which is still much what it was then, a Picard village of oak and daub, half hidden in high hedges and rows of trees. Before it, to the north, lay a wide rolling plain of ploughed fields, with the spire and local castle of Agincourt showing above a further group of trees some 3000 yards away. It was the night of October 24th, 1415, cloudy, without a moon, and nasty with rain on clay soil. The camp fires of the large French army to the north shone against the low clouds, and the noise of the men round them as they sang and drank could be heard.

Battle of Agincourt, Friday, October 25th, 1415.

The action that followed on the morrow, St. Crispin's Day, October 25th, was, on the French side, a piece of growing confusion. The ordering of the French Constable was bad. All his large command was confused, over dense, bunched between two bits of wood. The original determination, which was wise, to await the English attack, and so neutralise



THE FIELD OF AGINCOURT

the great advantage of the English (or, rather, Welsh) long bow, was abandoned. The character of the ground was not taken into account (it was sodden with rain and worthless for a cavalry charge of heavy, plate-armoured, men at arms). Of something less than a thousand fully equipped men at arms, sent to charge the English archers after their first volley of arrows, not a fifth deployed at the right moment. The second discharge of arrows threw that comparatively small body of horse on the narrow front into panic and confusion, plunging into the mud ; they broke back upon their fellows, and the whole thing became chaos. The English archers abandoned the use of the bow, and went forward with the battle axe and dagger. But so large was the packed mass of the enemy, that for two hours the struggle went on without a decision, and Henry himself was in perpetual danger : at one moment the crown of his helmet was cut through by a sword stroke ; the Duke of Alençon had already beaten down the Duke of York. Yet Alençon was captured, and immediately afterwards died.

There was a disastrous error at the end of the fight. The baggage train at Maisoncelles, being attacked and plundered by an unimportant irregular local body, the prisoners in the hands of Henry's army were massacred. There was still a reserve body of the enemy, but it did not sufficiently rally, and was in turn dispersed with as heavy loss as the first.

The victory was complete. The Duke of Orleans was a prisoner, as was the Duke of Bourbon ; and 8000 of the gentry and their immediate attendants, with we know not how many of the followers, were dead. Henry's loss, though small, was severe for his small command ; the Duke of York had fallen, and so had something like a fifth of all that small body which had performed so fine a march from Harfleur.

Such was the fight of St. Crispin's Day, Friday, October 25th, 1415, and unlike any other battle fought upon French soil, since St. Thomas's death and the break-up of the Plantagenet empire, this battle was followed by an experiment

which all but permanently united the two crowns. Four days later the remnant of the little English body was at Calais; less than three weeks after, on November 16th, Henry sailed to Dover (in a storm). The whole nation was in exaltation at his return. He rode into London to an imposing triumph on the 23rd. A great levy of money was voted to him, the rights of merchandise for the holding of the sea, and a subsidy on wool. Henry himself ascribed his victory to his orthodoxy: it was a reward for his support of the true Pope at Rome, against the rival Pope favoured by the French crown.

He had risked and won. No man had ever more fully succeeded in a policy of all or nothing. His new military renown had wiped out the shame of the usurpation, and one might have thought the Lancastrian throne secure for ever.

No immediate fruit of Agincourt.

The great victory in France had no immediate and direct effect.

It was not the victory of a man with a strong army, who, as the result of a decision, carries on the campaign and achieves a political object. It was an amazing chance achievement, leaving its general with but a handful to work with, and, as we have seen, he had to get back to the sea-coast and to England.

But with good fortune and policy the future would still be with him, for the French realm was still divided. Good fortune Henry obtained from his stars; policy he constructed with his own very great skill, and between them he died a satisfied man.

The good fortune was the violent increase in the bitterness between the French factions, and we see it developing for three years after Agincourt: autumn, 1415, to autumn, 1418.

The heir of the King of France, the original Dauphin, died. The second brother, now Dauphin, allied himself to the Duke of Burgundy, who promised to assist him against the King of England; but this second brother also died, in the spring of 1417, eighteen months after Agincourt, leaving

a third brother, a young boy, to be Dauphin. The Duke of Burgundy believed that the last prince had been poisoned. The mad king's wife, Isabella of Bavaria, that abominable woman who had been put under arrest and was the virulent enemy of her own blood, he rescued, and with a very large mounted force of 60,000 men he marched on Paris.

The faction now controlling the capital of France and the king were already known, as we have seen, from their chief family, as the Armagnacs. The queen, rescued by Burgundy, proclaimed herself regent during her husband's lunacy, and Burgundy her lieutenant. That was in the summer of 1417. The civil dissension which cut France in two was so violent that most of the provincial nobles of any importance were held by it to their groups at the centre, and unable to defend their estates and governments elsewhere.

The capture of Paris by Burgundy, 1418.

By the spring of the next year, 1418, an effort was made at peace. The Duke of Burgundy seemed to be more ready to compromise than the Armagnacs—perhaps because the latter held Paris, and felt themselves the stronger. But the populace were enraged at such obstinacy for war on the part of the party in possession; they opened the gates of Paris to the Burgundians, who poured in, and mastered the Armagnac faction, while the mob, not very logically, broke open the gaols and massacred the prisoners.

Between the 23rd of May and the middle of June the Burgundian faction became complete masters of the king and of the city, and the queen was with their chief, the duke. The boy, who was now eldest surviving son of the mad King of France, the third Dauphin,[1] was saved, and the remnants of the Armagnac faction, gathered in Poitiers, set up a rival government to the nominally royal government in the capital under the Duke of Burgundy and the queen.

Such was the situation by the autumn of 1418, and every stage of it was an opportunity for the sagacious and

[1] He is, of course, the Dauphin of Joan of Arc: Charles VII.

unbreaking policy of the Lancastrian. The two French factions hated each other far more than they hated the ally of either, and far more than they hated alien interference with the affairs of the French realm.

Let us see how the King of England used the opportunity of three years' length (autumn, 1415, to autumn, 1418), which I have just sketched on its French side.

He began, immediately on his return from the triumph of Agincourt, by receiving Sigismund the Emperor.

Sigismund the Emperor supports Henry.

Sigismund was very keen to get support in his great effort to settle the schism in Christendom, of which I have already given a very brief account: the distraction of rival Popes. And Henry, since Agincourt, was a great personage indeed, most important to the emperor's plans. To the prestige of the English throne he added proved capacity for very decisive military success. The condition of France was such that Sigismund evidently thought Henry the power best worth courting, and Henry solemnly reiterated to him in the presence of French ambassadors his claim to the French crown, and as solemnly offered to resign it if the French council would consent to dismember their realm and give him all that his great-grandfather had been promised by the Treaty of Brétigny. The French council, of course, refused, but Sigismund took Henry's claim quite seriously: and he was right.

In the summer of that same year, 1416, after these negotiations in England, the Armagnacs, who had just got hold of power in France, tried to retake Harfleur with the help of Genoese vessels, and failed; another addition of prestige to the English monarchy and its new dynasty. In the early autumn, in the first week of September, 1416, Sigismund and Henry made a formal alliance. Then they went over to Calais and there met the Duke of Burgundy. That great feudal noble of the Crown of France, himself a cadet of the French royal family, and in territorial power a local sovereign of all the eastern part of the realm, entered into

The Emperor, Henry, and Burgundy meet, 1416.

some agreement which is still mysterious. Without a doubt, there was a draft treaty, in which it was proposed to recognise Henry's claim to the Crown of the Capetians; but, on the other hand, we must remember what a sacred thing the Capetian succession was to every French mind. It is possible, or probable, therefore, that Burgundy never signed that treaty; indeed, such signature would have forbidden him to control the Crown, which was his object. But the French thought that he had signed it, and the ostensible purpose of the meeting, which was the ending of the Papal schism, was not accepted as the real one. Sigismund went off to the Council of Constance, intent upon his own great object of restoring peace by the choice of one Pope whom all Europe could obey. He had secured the support of the English prelates for his candidate—but his policy of recognising Henry V had made the French prelates support the rival Pope: the schism endured. But for the political agreement between Lancastrian and German, Europe might have had religious peace. As it was, the Papacy was not wholly healed for thirty more years: and then it was too late. Burgundy went off to make that alliance with the Dauphin of the day which we have just seen, and which, by the way, lends further support to the reasonable belief that he did not formally accept Henry's claim to the French Crown.

Abortive treaty with Burgundy.

The moment Burgundy began that march on Paris with his great cavalry force, of which I have spoken, the King of England judged rightly that his moment had come, and he struck. All the available forces of the French were arrayed in civil war one against the other. There was not a man left to defend Normandy. On August 1st, 1417, Henry landed in Normandy and began a systematic conquest of the province, with a large body of artillery (1000 gunners), nearly 17,000 fully armed mounted men, as many archers, and all the rest of the equipment which these entailed. The natural defenders of the province, the nobles, were absorbed in the mortal quarrel of Armagnac and Burgundian, and the English army

Conquest of Normandy begun, August, 1417.

—English speaking now, be it remembered, in all ranks, and by that fact alone quite foreign to the native population—took town after town and castle after castle; some by capitulation after a short siege, some (such as Bayeux) by voluntary surrender, some (like Caen) by assault. There was no armed enemy in the field. The Government at Paris did no more than beg for an armistice. Henry refused it, save on his own fixed terms: that he should marry Catherine, the daughter of the king, be made regent, and inherit the succession after the king's death—terms which, of course, they would not grant. Henry's absence abroad led to Scotch raids at home (which failed), and to a renewal of attempted rebellion by John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham; but while Henry pursued his foreign policy unmoved, Oldcastle was caught and put to death.

Capture and execution of Sir John Oldcastle, December 14th, 1417.

The last hours of that singular old man remained typical of the movement which he had headed. He made an endless harangue to the peers who judged him (with Henry's brother, Bedford, at their head), insisting that human beings had no right to punish other human beings by process of law—that being God's business—and (a very significant pronouncement so late in the day) affirming his belief that Richard II still lived in Scotland. He was roasted to death,[1] not without having made the singular but erroneous prophecy that he would rise upon the third day. His elderly widow calmly married a fifth husband.

All early 1418 was filled with Henry's continued conquest of Normandy under the aid of reinforcements. He thoroughly organised the province, gave it government efficient to its end of order, though alien and unpopular, and stood ready when the summer came (with its successful stroke by Burgundy and the French Queen upon Paris), and their recapture of power, to take whatever advantage the situation offered him. The two factions were both bidding for the

[1] Or, according to one account, first hung and then burnt.

Lancastrian's alliance. He treated them both as a superior: that of the Dauphin because the Dauphin, he said, had no standing—his own mother was to call him a bastard; that of Burgundy, because Burgundy was but a vassal to the King of France, which Henry claimed to be.

No conclusion was reached at the turn of the year 1418, but the Lancastrian had driven his wedge firmly into the deep rift now dividing the unity of the French State; and all during the summer of 1418 he had continued his capture of the Norman land. The great siege of Rouen belongs to that season, and went on all through the autumn into the winter. Burgundy had made a show of putting in an insufficient garrison, and later made a feeble show of offence, but lest the operation should weaken either against this rival, neither French faction could or would relieve Rouen.

End of Conquest of Normandy, January, 1419.

The town fell upon the 13th of January, 1419. The catastrophe produced a strong effect throughout France. It looked for a moment as though Armagnac and Burgundian would be reconciled in the face of such news. But civil war is the vice of the Gauls. With the end of February, 1419, Burgundy began to lean towards the acceptation of Henry's terms.

A meeting was arranged between the wretched King of France, his false Queen, with their daughter upon the one side, and Henry upon the other: at Meulent, between Mantes, which Henry had made his headquarters, and Pontoise, where the French court, under the power of Burgundy, lay. The negotiation was long and futile; lasting from the end of May (1419) into July. It was leading to nothing. Secretly the Duke of Burgundy and the Dauphin were playing with the idea of a real reconciliation. Of course, if that had come about, there was an end to Henry's grip on Normandy. He would have had no choice but to extricate such garrisons as he could and fall back on England.

It looked as though all Henry's effort had failed—when one of those acts of violence which so continually deflect

French history startled all that world. On the 10th of September the Duke of Burgundy had come to meet the young Dauphin at the Bridge of Montereau on the Yonne. He hesitated: he was not sure that his former opponents were sincere. He was right; but he dreaded public accusation if, in this crisis, he should withdraw. He went forward through gates that were locked behind him, and even as he knelt at the Dauphin's feet, that prince's guardian and friend, Tannegui du Chastel, who had saved him in the terrible night when Burgundy's entry had led to the massacres in Paris, struck Burgundy with an axe, and he was overwhelmed and murdered.

Murder of the Duke of Burgundy, September 10th, 1419.

The Dauphin protested through the years that he was innocent of planning the crime; but his supporters at least felt it to be due vengeance for the former murder of Orleans. The Burgundian faction — and it, at the moment, meant Paris and the control of the king—mad with anger, rallied to Henry. On the 20th November, Paris signed an armistice. The young heir of the murdered Duke of Burgundy claimed the Lancastrian for an ally; Isabella of Bavaria, the Queen of France, consented to all that the King of England might demand, and was so base as to sacrifice her own character to her love of revenge for Burgundy. She repeated it that the Dauphin was not Charles' son.

Consequent admission of Henry V to power in France.

On the 2nd of December, 1419, the preliminaries were signed. Henry was to marry Catherine, daughter and heiress of the French Crown, to be Regent of France while Charles the mad king lived (but working with a French council only), to succeed upon that king's death. The usual dragging, lengthy negotiations continued till after the middle of May; the full instrument was ratified at Troyes. On the 30th of that month Catherine and Henry were married. He besieged and took Sens and Meulan, and with his new father-in-law and wife entered Paris upon the 18th of November, showing for the first time to its changeable populace that curious, thin, set, crop-haired face of his, and coming down the old

Treaty of Troyes signed, May 30th, 1420.

Roman street of St. Martin, kissing the relics at the church doors to the right and to the left. The States General of the kingdom were gathered; Henry's position was admitted.

With February of the next year, 1421, the new queen was crowned with extraordinary magnificence in London. But even as the pomp of that ceremonial was fading, there came news which was perhaps an earnest of what was to follow after Henry's death. His brother Clarence had been defeated and killed, and part of his force captured at Beaugé in Anjou, by a mixed force of French and Scotch (it was two Scots who killed the duke). This was on March 22nd. Henry went over to France, landing on the 10th June, and taking with him a man long his captive, the young King of Scotland, in the hope that it might make the Scottish auxiliaries of the French desert their allies—which they did not. He drove his rival, the Dauphin, back from Chartres into Tours; after a long siege he reduced Meaux (it did not surrender till May of the following year), and was now master of everything north of the Loire save Maine and Anjou, and one or two castles which held out in the north-east.

First check at Beaugé: but Henry still holds all the north.

A son had already been born to him, on December 6th, 1421. In the month of May, 1422, his queen joined him, and they held high court in Paris—but Henry was already doomed. He was too weak to carry on the war in person, though he attempted to do so. By July he was failing. He handed over the command to his brother, Bedford, in the town of Corbeil, and was carried back to the royal house and castle in the wood of Vincennes, just to the east of the walls of Paris.

Birth of an heir, later Henry VI December, 6th, 1421.

Even as he died this soldier gave distinct, careful, and minute orders on the policy the guardians of his baby should pursue, giving those instructions to Bedford his brother, naming a tutor for the child, and appointing his other brother, Gloucester, guardian of the realm of England. He ordered them to beware above all of releasing Orleans, to offer the regency of France to Burgundy, whose alliance was the

mainstay of the Lancastrian policy, and who was never to be crossed or thwarted. Should Burgundy refuse, Bedford, as commander-in-chief, was to be regent.

Death of Henry V at Vincennes, August 31st, A.D. 1422.

They told him—but only on his insistence to know the truth—that he had two more hours to live: which was a little short of the mark. He made such peace as he could between his soul and God, and hearing the word "Jerusalem" in the psalm that was being recited beside his bed, muttered that he had longed to deliver the Holy Places: and so died, on August 31st, 1422.

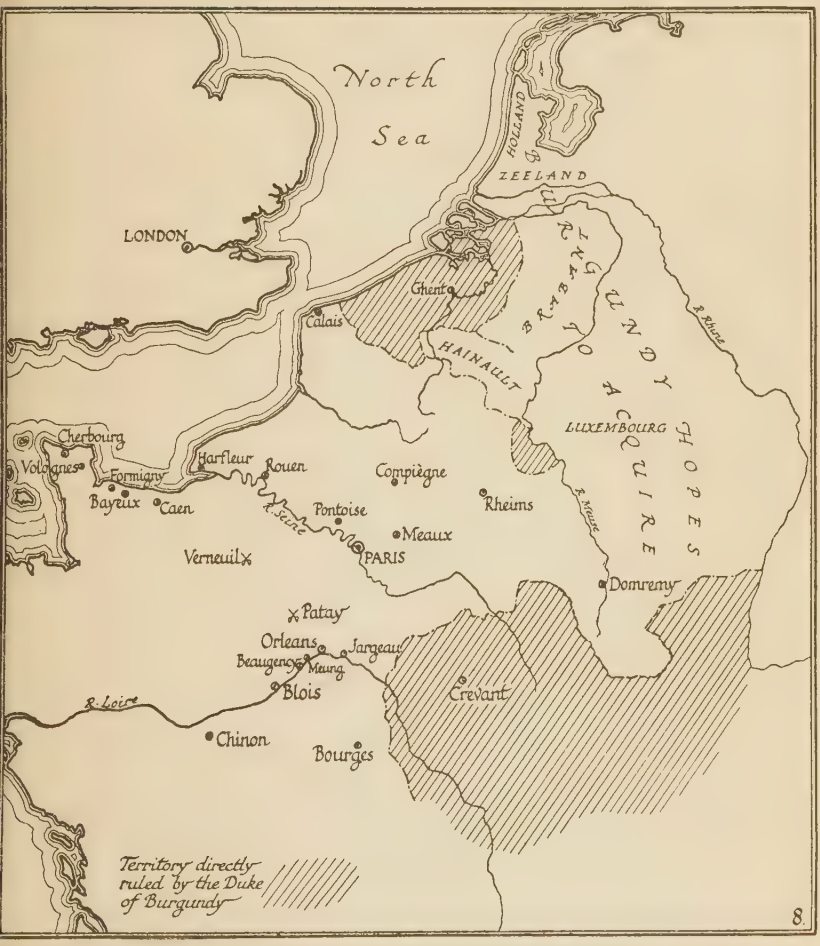
(D) The Loss of France

(April 12th, 1422, to August 12th, 1450—over 28 Years)

WITH the death of Henry V we enter the agony of the Plantagenets: the passing of the blood-royal of England. The Lancastrian usurpation had shaken its strict tradition; had been compelled to truckle and barter with its wealthy men, the Parliament; had been further compelled to seek a new foundation in foreign war. That adventure had had the astonishing success we have seen. But it was a success dependent upon French civil war. When the French dissensions were healed it could not stand: the position of the Lancastrian Plantagenets in France would be ruined.

The loss of France, defeat upon defeat, the crying need for money as the struggle continued and the taxable area shrank—all these exasperated the nation, and in such an air faction flourishes. The rule of succession being now blurred, the crown stood a prize to be disputed. Coincidently with the last reverses abroad come the first moves towards civil war at home, and after nearly thirty years of increasing foreign disaster come over thirty of that violent struggle between rival Plantagenet branches and individuals (supported and abandoned by the great families in turn), which we call "The Wars of the Roses." At their close, upon the field of Bosworth, the long tradition ended and the Plantagenet was no more.

In his place had come the unkingly Tudor, destined to break the traditions of England and, blindly, to ruin at last the monarchy itself, and to create in its place the rule of the rich.



THE LOSS OF NORTHERN FRANCE

Process of the loss of France: essential factors in the position:

The essential points to grasp in order to understand the second loss of France, and the final ruin of the ideal of an Anglo-French empire, are the following:—

1. The new English language.

1. The English forces supporting Henry V's policy in France were now wholly national, English-speaking in their officers as in their men, though some of the higher nobility and the court were still French-speaking, or, at any rate, bilingual. The soldiers and all the officers save those of the higher nobility were now divided by the definite test of language from those among whom they worked or held garrison. They were now increasingly felt to be *foreigners*, more than before Agincourt: much more than at Poitiers or Crécy, when the feeling of nationality had hardly yet appeared. The struggle after Henry V was still a contest between Plantagenet and Valois, but the Plantagenet forces, *including their leaders*, now formed a society distinct in language from the French.

2. The character of Bedford.

2. The command of these English forces in France was in the hands of a very able man, the Duke of Bedford; perhaps as good a soldier as his elder brother, Henry V, had been, and more genial, less cruel, much more liked by his Burgundian allies and by the other French with whom he dwelt; he was really respected.

3. The English army too small.

3. This English army was nothing like strong enough for its task. We must always keep steadily in mind throughout the Middle Ages, with their permanent Anglo-French problem, the comparative smallness of English population and revenue, both based ultimately on the available arable land of the realm. Even excluding Brittany, Guienne, and the east, a united Valois monarchy governed more or less directly at least twice the useful area governed by a Plantagenet: it had correspondingly larger revenue, at least, as a possibility; when Burgundy and the southern fiefs helped their lords, the French Valois kings, these could use indirectly far more men and money than their Plantagenet rivals.

Moreover, the English forces, being expeditionary, were

professional, and had to be paid and paid high. So long as most of Northern France was in Plantagenet hands revenue could be gathered from it. But as the area shrank, revenue shrank with it, and the very conditions of difficulty which made more effort—and therefore more expense—necessary, were those which lessened the income from which alone that expense could be met. It was, in an altered form, the same economic crux which we saw in the last volume destroying the power of John. The opportunity the English forces had had, and which Henry had so strenuously used, depended solely upon the division of France into two opposing commands under the two branches of the royal house ; the senior branch represented by the Dauphin Charles (falsely [1] accused of illegitimacy, even by his own mother) and the junior branch of Burgundy. If the alliance of the Duke of Burgundy with his immense recruiting and revenue field over all the east of France and the Low Countries, should be lost to the newly attempted Plantagenet monarchy of Paris and London, its chance of taking root in France would be gone at once. Indeed, the aid given by the Burgundian troops made all the difference to these first years after Henry's death : at the sieges of La Fère, of Nesle, of Guise, of Cravant, and at the heavy battle of Verneuil itself. When the Burgundian forces were gradually withdrawn, the forces of Bedford, seasoned though they were with many veterans and, as a rule, excellently led, could hardly keep up a sufficient pressure.

4. Character of Gloucester.

4. While the Duke of Bedford was commanding in France and was regent there, the Duke of Gloucester, the elder brother, was nominally regent in England. He was quite a different character: violent, suspicious, of little judgment. He did nothing but harm to his family's cause. Moreover, the young man (he was thirty-one at Henry V's death) had a divided power. The Council, a small body of great nobles

[1] The proof of Charles VII's legitimacy is his face. If ever there was a Valois, long-nosed, full-lipped, it is he.

and prelates, governed at his side, and more than he. This angered him and made him still more injudicious.

5. Character of Beaufort and his opposition.

5. Opposed to the Duke of Gloucester was an uncle of his striving for an equal voice in England, dominating the Council—Henry Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester, later Cardinal. His power lay in his superior intelligence and tenacity of character, in his very great wealth, in his husbanding of that wealth and lending it, when necessary, to the Crown. He was the son of John of Gaunt by his mistress, Katharine Swynford: one of that Beaufort family which was legitimised by law, but solemnly debarred from any claim to the throne, and the title of the head of which was Somerset. He was therefore the half-uncle both of the Duke of Bedford and of the Duke of Gloucester, and was the great-uncle of the new baby king. His opposition made still more for divided authority in England.

6. Gloucester's marriage.

6. Quite early after the death of Henry V (within three years) the Duke of Gloucester, claiming most wrongly, with impulsive avarice, the hand of a wild woman, Jacqueline of Hainault, whose lands would ultimately fall to the Duke of Burgundy, quarrelled violently with that prince. The result was not to throw Burgundy at once into the arms of his cousin, Charles of Valois, the legitimate French king, but it began to make Burgundy doubtful and half-hearted in his support of the Plantagenets.

7. In spite of the growing importance of artillery, the war which Bedford had to conduct against the Dauphin was mainly a war of sieges. Even his principal victory in the field, Verneuil, was but the pendant to the capture of a town. Now siege warfare has invariably these two qualities, sharply apparent in the last war, which was essentially one great siege: (1) It is a test of endurance: tenacity is the decider; (2) it is wearing to all the factors of a force—its numbers, its moral, its health, its civilian support. But the defensive of the XVth century was indefinitely multiplied. Every castle, every little walled town, must be reduced before a district

could be securely and finally held, and each such unit had a chance of prolonged resistance. It is true that both parties suffered the effects of such prolonged siege warfare, but, obviously, they pressed harder on a force distant from its government and main sources of supply than on the native bodies. Moreover, apart from Paris, most of the towns had a sentiment for the national French dynasty and (for what such civilian feeling may be worth) this sentiment made Bedford's task the harder.

8. The failure at Orleans.

8. In spite of that very bad handicap, it is just possible that the insufficient English forces, in spite of their lack of French recruitment, in spite of their insufficient financial supply, might have disheartened the French legitimist claims if they had taken Orleans. Orleans was the gate of Central France, which Charles of Valois still ruled. Its fall would have given the Plantagenets the passage over the Loire. But Orleans was relieved by the astonishing appearance in the French camp of Joan of Arc, and the effect she had upon the army of the Dauphin, Charles of Valois. This relief took place in early May, 1429, not seven years after Henry V's death; and thenceforward there is a gradual decline of Plantagenet power which takes the form of the capture of castle after castle and town after town until at last, after more than twenty years, not only Henry V's conquests, but all his ancestors' inheritance in Guienne are lost: everything is gone except Calais, and the Valois are supreme from the Pyrenees to the Channel.

This last process, though by far the longer part of the period, is the more wearisome to follow, and the less important; for the decisive moment of the war, and its turning-point, came with the relief of Orleans in 1429.

. . . . . .

Death of Charles VI of France, autumn, 1422.

Charles of France died in the autumn after the death of his son-in-law, Henry V. That was the first (and as yet no determining) shock to the power of the newly attempted dynasty. The baby of nine months old who was now to be

called Henry VI of England and II of France (but the latter title has never passed current in history), meant something to the French nobility so long as his grandfather, the French king, was alive and supporting the new arrangement. With his death the tendency of the French gentry in general to forget civil war and to rally to the male representative of the French royal line, the Capetian, Charles the Dauphin, appeared. It was at first only a vague mood ; but it hardened and increased. It did not mean so much that members of the French nobility, able to raise forces, transferred their allegiance from the baby, who was their legal sovereign by the Treaty of Troyes, to the young man Charles, who was their hereditary sovereign, as that men who were unshaken in their allegiance to a government still having at its head a Valois (whom they had obeyed all their lives) were much shaken in that allegiance when (after his death) a Plantagenet and a baby claimed it.

Crowning of Charles of Valois at Chartres.

The very statesmanlike project of giving the Plantagenet regency of France during Henry's minority to the native Duke of Burgundy came to nothing. The Duke of Bedford had to take up French government ; but almost coincidently with his nomination, Charles of Valois, the Dauphin had himself been anointed and crowned at Chartres (since Rheims, which was the proper place for a French coronation, was in the hands of the English and Burgundians).

His being thus first crowned, though in a fashion not traditional, had the effect of rallying to him some further forces, and Bedford met that danger by renewing very solemnly the alliance with Burgundy, and getting the Duke of Brittany to support them both. But he had still better reasons for his anxiety to confirm the Burgundian alliance. His younger brother, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, had in the month before, made that marriage with Jacqueline of Hainault which so gravely compromised the relations between the Duke of Burgundy and the Plantagenets, and which I will deal with more fully in a moment.

The three dukes met at Arras on the 8th April, 1423, and confirmed that bond. It was as much as to say that the whole of the north and east of France held together in support of the new Plantagenet dynasty in Paris as against the Valois. Burgundian and English troops marched side by side to raise the siege of Cravant, and won a common victory there.

That victory was important for this reason. Cravant, north of Avallon, on the Yonne, was just within the Duke of Burgundy's territory. He was being invaded; the relief of Cravant, therefore, helped as it was by Bedford's English troops, was of serious effect on the mind of Bedford's ally, and helped to keep him allied in the crisis that was to follow after the recent folly of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. But the Dauphin's armies continued to be reinforced by Scottish detachments and certain aid recruited in Italy.

It has to be remarked all through this war how singularly the forces had diminished from the old feudal days, when a man summoned as of right a rough body of all tenants for brief service. Moreover, trained and skilled technicians, especially gunners, were becoming more and more necessary (and expensive), as were special arms: archers and cross-bow men; and the armour of men at arms was more costly in type. An extra of five, or even three, thousand men made a difference at once to either side, and this paucity of really serviceable men, under arms and trained, helps greatly to explain what followed.

Release of the King of Scotland.

Late in that same year, 1423, a great Plantagenet stroke of policy was accomplished in proposing the release of the young King of Scotland, James, who had been long held a prisoner in England. In early 1424, he went home, married an English wife (a Swynford—or Beaufort—the daughter of Somerset and niece of the Bishop of Winchester, of whom we have spoken), and, of course, his release was accompanied by a promise that no Scottish contingencies should fight again for the French, though those in the French service, notably Lord Buchan (Stewart of Darnley, a very notable

commander and brother of the Scottish regent), remained helping the Valois. But though this release of James was politic, as tending to lessen the difficulties of Bedford in France by stopping, or diminishing, the Scottish recruitment of the Dauphin's armies, it was a proof of weakness. Henry V had been under no such compulsion. Bedford would not have let the hostage go without very serious cause: and that cause was the peril of a slackening in Burgundy's aid.

Battle of Verneuil, August 17th, 1424.

None the less, in that same year, 1424, on the 17th August, the chances of the new Plantagenet dynasty in France reached, in appearance, their highest point. Bedford, married to Burgundy's sister, felt sure of his support, and on that day was fought at Verneuil, in the hill country of the Perche, a very violent battle which turned heavily against the French, and in which the Scottish contingents were nearly annihilated. Buchan himself was killed, and so was the very recently arrived Douglas, who had been made Duke of Touraine by the Dauphin.

The situation of the place is significant of these wars. It was in what would be, under modern conditions, the heart of occupied territory: over the Norman border and four good days' march away from the Dauphin's boundary. But all that fighting was essentially a reduction, or defence, of numerous scattered defensive posts, and the country in between was open to the march of armies. The Dauphin's men had thus raided right up north into Normandy and occupied Verneuil, when Bedford turned west and, with his Burgundian contingent, won his victory outside the town.

Unfortunately for the Plantagenet cause, this was the very moment when the Duke of Gloucester, regent in England, chose to play the fool. We have seen how he had, the year before, wed Jacqueline, lady of the county of Hainault, and, further, heiress to the great bulk of the Low Countries of Zeeland and Holland. She was thus the feudal chief of those many wealthy towns which have always played so

great a part in the destiny of Western Christendom. Now, it had always been the object of the Cadet Royal branch of France, the Dukes of Burgundy with their vast fiefs in the east (which made them almost as strong against their feudal overlord, the French Crown, as Henry II of England had been centuries before), to extend the area of their direct rule, and their one fixed aim at this moment was the control of all the Netherlands. The Duke of Burgundy of that day, Philip, the necessary support of the new Plantagenet French kingship with its baby king, had a young cousin of sixteen, John, Duke of Brabant, to whom he would be heir. Jacqueline had been married to this lad, bringing all her great inheritance with her—pretty well all the Low Countries—uniting all the country of the Lower Scheldt and of Zeeland and Holland to the north. There was not likely to be any child of that unhappy marriage, and the Duke of Burgundy felt himself secure of ultimately adding to his house nearly all that we now call Holland and Belgium. Young Brabant's wife had fled from him to England before the death of Henry V; and there Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, had showed an attraction towards her which was possibly due to her own intrigue—but there also entered into it very largely the immense fortune which she represented.

Marriage of Jacqueline of Hainault and the Low Countries.

After Henry V's death the Duke of Gloucester conceived the exceedingly imprudent idea of a marriage by claiming that Jacqueline could not be the legal wife of her husband, Brabant, on account of a nearness of relationship (although there had been a regular dispensation granted from the Council of the Church, then sitting at Constance).

Such a proposal not only offended all the conscience of the time, but was a direct challenge to the Duke of Burgundy. For if Gloucester got hold of Jacqueline's land there was an end to the long-nourished plan of a great Burgundian realm from Switzerland to the Zuyder Zee. Gloucester had made things worse in that time of papal confusion through getting Jacqueline's marriage with Brabant annulled by the *third*

and least accepted claimant to the Holy See: the Spanish anti-pope Benedict; and in December, 1424, while yet the effects of the battle of Verneuil were being felt all over Northern France, and the chance of final success for the baby Henry VI and an Anglo-French dynasty was still high, he marched from Calais with a respectable force and seized his wife's dowry of Hainault, behind which lay the mass of her rich dependencies to the north. The result was that all

The resulting quarrel with Burgundy, 1424-25.

1425, and onwards, is one violent quarrel between Burgundy and the Duke of Gloucester. There was, indeed, no reconciliation as yet between Burgundy and the Dauphin, but it would want little henceforward to upset the balance, and meanwhile Burgundy remained neutral. Bedford could only now depend in France, through the folly of his brother, upon such forces as England could send him and the little he could himself recruit on French soil.

There is something tragic about the position of this able, courteous, politic, and loyal man—excellent soldier also—thwarted and ruined in plan by an incompetent brother. He had behaved in civil matters with greater skill than his dead brother the king, and in military matters almost as well. He had appointed French governors to the two out of his three provinces (Champagne and Picardy—giving the command of Paris to the very man who had held Rouen against Henry V). He was praised for his justice and careful dealing. He kept all the law and administration native, and, indeed, even so late as this in the xvth century, it was natural for a Plantagenet to rule with French speech and by French methods, for Western civilisation was still one. He had done everything to confirm the foundations of an Anglo-French realm, when his difficult task was imperilled by the irresponsibility of a younger brother. He was compelled to return to England and to waste precious time in the most anxious period of his regency.

All this happened just at the critical moment of the Plantagenet chances in France. Nor was it possible to play

the Duke of Burgundy by the threat of holding these northern provinces of Holland and the rest, for the Burgundians felt certain they could recover them for the Brabant inheritance. Their certitude was confirmed when, in 1428, Jacqueline was caught and detained by Burgundy and compelled to acknowledge him as her heir,[1] and though she escaped, the issue was not doubtful. All this while the balanced judgment, weighty character, and great wealth of Henry Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester, was struggling with the official position of the foolish Gloucester in England. Now one, now the other, had the greater power. But in 1427 Beaufort abandoned the struggle in fear of civil war. He was made Cardinal and went abroad. His support among the great families, and even amongst the populace, had been the greater because people suspected the folly of Gloucester might go so far as to attempt the throne.

Situation in 1428 due to Burgundy's holding Jacqueline.

That was how things stood in the year 1428; power in England divided; the armed strength of Burgundy, now neutral at heart as regards its old quarrel with the Dauphin, and actively employed in reducing the Low Countries and with a hold on the so-called wife of the regent of England. Yet things might be retrieved by one successful military act. A determination was taken by Plantagenet Councils, held more than once in Paris, to cross the Loire, to drive the Dauphin from what he yet held on the south of the river, and to make the little child, now nearly seven years old, king of all France in fact, as he was already in fact king of most of the North.

The English decide to cross the Loire.

The decision has been called unwise by many historians. Brittany had already weakened in her alliance; had been with difficulty brought back to admit her nominal vassalage to the child Henry VI of England and II of France. Burgundy was notoriously doubtful; and it is said that Bedford

[1] She died in 1436. That is how you have the great Burgundian House dominating the lowlands during the rest of the fifteenth century. Before her death she ceded the territory directly to the Duchy of Burgundy.

opposed the project of attempting to rule the South at this moment with the insufficient forces of England alone. But the truth is that historians have spoken thus after the event. It is possible that even if Bedford had managed to secure the passage of the Loire and to drive the legitimate King of France before him southwards, Burgundy would have attacked the Plantagenet power in the long run. It is equally possible that—impressed by its victory—he might have renewed the alliance. At any rate, the siege of Orleans, which was opened in that year, came very near to succeeding. Orleans was the gate to the South, the passage of the Loire. If it fell the plan was in a fair way to success.

The siege of Orleans, 1428-29.

The town was completely invested by the autumn of 1428.

Salisbury was a vigorous commander with an eye, and given to direct action. He was a Montagu, now just forty, and with a long experience of war. He had commanded under Henry V ever since the opening of these campaigns, and knew thoroughly all the conditions of them. It was the first great misfortune of the new régime that he was killed in this very siege. He had attempted to carry the place by storm, and had begun by trying to force the works on the south of the Loire, at the end of the bridge. He captured the outer defences on October the 24th, but on the 26th he was struck by a cannon ball as he was judging the best approach to the inner works of the bridgehead. They took him to Meung, where he died. He was succeeded by William de la Pole, the Earl of Suffolk. The change was of disadvantage to Bedford's government. William de la Pole was younger than Salisbury—thirty-three. He had the solidity of his family (Richard's counsellor was his grandfather) and their loyalty in service (his father had died before Harfleur, his elder brother at Agincourt). But he lacked the rapidity of judgment essential to military command.

He was wise, however, in abandoning the idea of direct assault. He sat down to invest Orleans, and had soon

established a number of "Bastilles"—that is, little strong points, block-houses, or fortlets making a circle round its walls; but they had not enough men for a circumvallation: the gaps were wide; and all during the winter they thus held the place imperfectly blockaded. The English numbers were not quite large enough to prevent occasional slight reliefs. Raids of small bodies of men and provisions managed to get into Orleans at times, but Charles the Dauphin, from his base of Blois, a day's march down the river, watched the progress of the siege with sinking heart. He had had accumulated munitions of war and provisions in great stores around him, but he could not sufficiently relieve the town. Orleans suffered more and more from the pressure of the blockade: at last it offered to surrender if the surrender could be made to the Duke of Burgundy. Bedford refused the offer, and for the moment, in the season of Lent, 1429, the fall of the city seemed certain by the early summer at latest.

We know that the court of Charles was at its lowest depth of depression, and there was some talk of a general retreat, and even of the flight of the Valois to a foreign court, when, at the very end of this February, 1429, there appeared in his presence a young girl of seventeen who brought with her a certain magic. She was called Joan, the daughter of a small farmer in Domrémy, and she had been thus sent because her visions and prophecies, 200 miles away to the east, in Lorraine, that she would save the kingdom of France and crown its legitimate king at Rheims, had been reported to Charles and his suite. The court of the Dauphin, in its extremity, would catch at straws. This young woman, or, rather, child, coming thus to Chinon, where the court at the moment lay, picked out the Dauphin moving among the rest disguised, as it were, by having laid aside all mark of royalty and carefully chosen a common garb. She gave other proofs, as they were held to be, of powers supernatural, and made a most profound effect upon Charles

Appearance of Joan of Arc at the Valois Court, February, 1429.

himself by one in particular. He took her aside, asked her some question in matters which he alone knew, and of which she could not have heard from any human source. Her answer—what it was we know not—convinced him of her mission from another world. Therefore, on the very morrow of the interview she was armed, mounted, and sent forth.

Her nature.

What follows is one of the most famous episodes in human history. In the opinion of most educated men of the time, the girl was possessed of strange but perhaps unholy faculties. To the common soldiers on her enemies' side she was a witch ; to those upon her own side a heaven-sent apparition, fulfilling the ancient prophecy that a Virgin should save the kingdom of France. To the increasingly sceptical modern world of the XVIth, XVIIth, and XVIIIth centuries she was either an impostor or a lunatic, though one capable of inspiring enthusiasm.[1]

It is characteristic of the change which has come over the European mind that to-day she is canonised in the Catholic Church, an accepted saint with altars, and that sober history after the fullest research can only take her supernatural mission for granted. Even the popular writers of England and America, to whom the Middle Ages are a foreign country, accept, nearly all of them, her mission ; some of them her not mortal powers.

She relieves Orleans, May 8th, 1429.

She relieved Orleans (through the moral effect produced in the Dauphin's army) on the 8th May, 1429. The relief was effected by the breaking of the siege-line south of the river, and, the ring being so snapped (it must be added that the English forces were dispirited by a religious dread), there was nothing for their commander, Suffolk, but to raise the siege. He tried, however, to hold on to the Loire until the regent, Bedford, could bring up reinforcements, and so held

[1] Less than 100 years ago, Lingard, the founder of all modern English history, though a Catholic priest, and therefore not suffering from any silly dogma forbidding him to accept the supernatural, took it for granted that Joan was a mere enthusiast suffering from hallucinations.

Beaugency and Jargeau. But five weeks after the relief of Orleans he was himself taken at Jargeau, when that place was carried by storm ; all the line of the Loire fell. Talbot succeeded him in command. This was a very remarkable man, a lord of the Welsh marches, eagle-faced, tall, soldierly ; of a strong, spare build that carried him vigorous through more than fifty years of war. His life is coincident with the triumph and the disasters of the Lancastrian adventure. He was now before Orleans, over forty years of age (the date of his birth is not certain, but he was at least of such years in 1429). He is continually in the field, and falls in the last defeat, when we shall find him before Castillon near his seventieth year, still leading, in 1453, when the last remnant of the Plantagenet heritage in Southern France was abandoned. He has left a great legend among those whom he combated. In his own country his fame is less by far than he deserves, for it is associated with defeat ; but along the Dordogne you may still hear his name. He got a reinforcement of 4000, as he fell back north, and, a week after the fall of Jargeau, on the 18th June, 1429, he was captured in his turn, with a loss of 1200 men, at Patay. From what one can judge by contemporary record, the defeat was a moral one, due to lack of confidence more than to lack of numbers.

Battle of Patay, June 18th, 1429.

But the English forces, though defeated at Orleans, and twice again shortly afterwards, were not annihilated ; there were English and French Plantagenet garrisons all over the country north of Loire. Therefore Joan of Arc's project to march with the Dauphin to Rheims and there have him crowned, was perilous. The towns on the way were doubtful ; some opened their gates, some refused. Rheims itself rose against its Burgundian garrison (they were probably not very keen on the Plantagenet side), and Charles was crowned King of France there on July 17th,[1] in the traditional place

Charles the Dauphin crowned Charles VII of France at Rheims, July 17th, 1429.

[1] A coincidence for the superstitious : on that same date, twenty-four years later, Talbot fell in the final defeat of his king's armies.

and full traditional manner—save that the Twelve Peers were not at his side.

Joan of Arc now said that her mission was over, that she had no more supernatural commands to advance or counsel to give. She begged to be dismissed. Foolishly, she was retained. The French captains dared not lose the moral effect which she had produced in their ranks; and those rich courtiers and their insufficient prince whom they served were far too corrupt to retain the impression of her strange powers. She had soon become for such sceptics a thing to be used, a mascot to the ignorant soldiery. She herself, henceforward, is no more than the heroine of a great tragedy.

Joan is captured at Compiègne and burnt at Rouen, May 29th, 1431.

She was captured in an attack on Compiègne, tried under Bedford's authority by the clergy of the Burgundian faction, with the University of Paris aiding, as a heretic and witch at Rouen, and burned there on the 29th of May, 1431. She could have saved herself by a permanent recantation. She did nearly save herself by a temporary one. At the end she maintained her innocence of witchcraft, but the reality of her visions. No effort was made upon the Dauphin's side to save her; nor must we regard the tragedy as a specifically political thing, although, of course, her name and amazing career were hostile to the Plantagenet interest, and in some measure to the Burgundian. The principal authorities supporting the Valois, clerical and lay, had no grasp of what she was, or of what she had accomplished, or how; those of the Plantagenets thought themselves rid of a nuisance.

But the loss of France went on. It was not greatly accelerated, as it might have been if the French king, Charles VII, now fully crowned, had followed up the enthusiasm of Joan of Arc's first campaign. But he was ill advised. He hesitated. He gave breathing space to Bedford. The loss of towns and castles therefore slackened, but it could not be stopped.

There was an attempt to counter Charles' coronation at Rheims (which had had so great a moral effect) by bringing

in fresh forces and crowning there also in turn the young child Henry, now in his eleventh year (he had already been anointed king at Westminster two years before). The project of forcing as far as Rheims was found, however, to be hopeless. The child had to be crowned in Paris, in Notre Dame, and was so on December 17th, 1431. Paris, it must be remembered, was still in favour of the Plantagenets, for it was still Burgundian in faction, and had not appreciated how far the alienation between Burgundy and the Plantagenets had gone. But this coronation was of no value, either politically or militarily, and shortly after came a second blow to the Burgundian alliance which was fatal. This time not Gloucester, but the much wiser Bedford, was the culprit. His wife, the sister of Burgundy, was but lately dead, when, in May, 1433, he committed the false step of marrying Jacquetta of Luxemburg,[1] a vassal of Burgundy. It was a marriage which threatened, again, to diminish the Burgundian power. Henry Beaufort, Cardinal of Winchester, once more came forward with his wisdom and statesmanship to try and reconcile Bedford with the man who was still nominally his ally. He brought them together at St. Omer, but they would not speak to each other.

Henry VI of England and France crowned in Paris as Henry II of France, December 17th, 1431.

Imprudent marriage of Bedford with Jacquetta of Luxemburg, May, 1433.

King Charles VII of France (as he now was) or, rather, his advisers, acted at once. They suggested mediation by the Pope (for Burgundy was still loth to break openly with the English—for that would have been to perjure himself), and a great meeting of ecclesiastics, with representatives not only from the Papacy but from the Council of Bale, then sitting, with Cardinal Beaufort also and twenty-six coadjutors accompanying him, half of French and half of English birth, with twenty-nine ministers of the French king, and,

[1] Jacqueline and Jacquetta are interchangeable names, and that leads to some confusion between the two wives of the brothers Gloucester and Bedford, especially as both were quasi-dependent on Burgundy. But the far separate districts of Hainault and Luxemburg are enough to distinguish them in the reader's memory.

Ecclesiastical Council of Arras, August, 1435, and death of Bedford.

oddly enough, a great number of deputies from distant places—even from Norway and Poland—met at Arras, in August, 1435. But there was a deadlock. In September, Beaufort withdrew, and before the end of that month France and Burgundy were once more reconciled and allies. But already Bedford was dead and buried in Rouen Cathedral.

The decline of Plantagenet power went on a little more rapidly. Paris, no longer held by a Burgundian bond, allowed the captains of the Valois to enter it. It was lost to the Plantagenets in 1436. Certain towns surrendered in Normandy were, indeed, recovered by Richard, Duke of York—he had been named [1] to command in the place of Bedford and Talbot, and was already famous in these wars. He raided up to the very walls of the capital. The Burgundian forces did not take the field; they still so far respected the old oath as to remain at least neutral (save for an attempt on Calais, which was regarded as connected with Flanders). In 1437 Warwick succeeded York, and effected nothing. In

The loss of France continues.

1439 Meaux, one of the remaining Plantagenet garrisons near Paris, fell; and though Harfleur was re-taken from the French, Pontoise fell at the end of a heavy siege.

It is in 1439, ten years after the great exploit and turning-point of Orleans and the apparition of the Maid, that we get what is important to remember throughout the future of the war: a definite and growing demand for peace in the public opinion of England. It was not an acquiescence with the complete loss of France: it was hoped to save much by negotiation, and therefore the peace policy had a strong support.

A demand for peace is rejected by the French, 1439.

How strong was this desire for peace in England we can judge by the fact that Cardinal Beaufort put himself at the

[1] This is that son of Anne Mortimer and the beheaded Earl of Cambridge, whose lineage will be seen in the table on page 220, and who was the true king of England. As yet the claim was not pressed, but we shall look to it within a few years as the force which furnished the Wars of the Roses. He was at this moment (1436-37) in his twenty-sixth year.

head of it, and Gloucester (as always, in opposition to the cardinal) had no real backing at home when he advised continued warfare. It was the French who refused to make peace, because they felt that the tide was flowing strongly on their side. From their point of view, they were wise, for nothing could now stop the continual progress of the Valois king's forces, though certainly he himself could not yet believe how complete the final results would be.

The end.

The story of the surrenders is long and monotonous, and may be put into a few lines. In 1440 the spirit of peace was pushed as far as possible by Beaufort through the surrender of the Duke of Orleans, who had been a prisoner in England ever since Agincourt. It is true that Orleans,[1] now elderly, was expected to intrigue against and so weaken his cousin the French king ; but he would also urge peace. In 1444 a two-years' armistice was arranged (it was the same year as that of Henry's marriage with all its consequences, to which I shall turn in a moment). In 1448 the long dwindling hostilities blazed up again through difficulties upon the possession of Maine (which we shall also meet in connection with the royal marriage), and on the pretext of an earlier raid made upon the borders of Normandy. At the Castle of Roches Tranchelieu, near Chinon, King Charles the VII of France held council on the 17th of July, 1449, the twentieth anniversary of his crowning at Rheims, and broke the truce. He advanced against Rouen. He had the supreme advantage of artillery, which the French had now developed beyond any other people, and that recently. To his guns there was no sufficient reply. Half Normandy was in his hands by the summer of 1449. Before the end of that year, on the 4th November, he had taken Rouen itself. All the province was rising against the English. The Duke of Somerset (Beaufort's nephew), who was commanding, fell back upon Caen. One last pitiful effort was made. Something under

Loss of Normandy and all the North : Formigny, April 15th, 1550.

[1] He is one of the very few royalties who have written good verse.

3000 men were gathered at Southampton. Their discipline was shockingly bad. Before embarking they murdered the Bishop of Chichester, who had arrived too late with their pay. They were landed at Cherbourg to relieve Somerset in Caen, and were put under Sir Thomas Kyriel. He added about an equal number from the garrisons around, and marched up with some 5000 to 6000 men through Valognes towards Bayeux, to join his superior at Caen. He had arrived at Formigny [1] on the road from Valognes to Bayeux on April 15th. There the English force was brought to battle and destroyed, with near 4000 dead, 1200 prisoners, and but a few hundreds escaped. Numbers, guns, and a final charge of horse upon the flank of the shaken defence settled that decisive day. Caen was besieged and surrendered—by Somerset in person to Charles in person—on June 24th. Only Cherbourg remained. The forces of the King of France marched against it, besieged it for but a few days, and on August 12th, 1450, received its surrender. With Cherbourg the last square mile of territory (outside Calais) which had been held for the Plantagenet south of the Channel coast was gone. Already Richard, Duke of York, had landed from Ireland in England, and the shadow of a coming civil war had appeared.

There remained to the Plantagenet throne its last province, a remnant of Guienne—that is, the Gironde and Lower Dordogne and Garonne.

That was a very different matter from Normandy. There had never been a conquest of that land. It had belonged to the successors of Henry II for 300 years. The King of England was its natural lord. There had been a Plantagenet court with French-speaking governors for all those centuries at Bordeaux. The town flourished on its

[1] The site of this action, the last of all those innumerable Anglo-Norman fights since the Conquest, is the ground on either side of the little station of the light railway outside Formigny village, to the left (as the English were marching) or north of the main road making for Bayeux from Valognes.

trade with England in wine. It detested re-union with the Crown of Paris. Yet was it lost. At first, lacking all English succour (it was the moment of York's challenge at home), Bordeaux and Bayonne were early occupied by the Valois troops—June and August, 1451.

But the Gascons soon rebelled in favour of the Plantagenet connection, and the prosperous traditions of so many generations. Then did there appear once more the aged Talbot, so old for battle that men called him eighty years old (he was near seventy). He came to succour the Gascons with an army which landed at Soulac; the inhabitants rose in his favour, and he entered Bordeaux on the 23rd October, 1452.

French armies marched south. It was in July, 1453—the 17th, the fourth anniversary of the breach of the truce—that the decision came. The French were besieging Castillon. Talbot, gathering a very large force of Gascons, and adding them to his own expeditionary body of Englishmen, marched to its relief. The artillery of the French (300 pieces large and small!) destroyed their opponents, and Talbot himself and his son, Lord Lisle, were among the dead.[1]

The subsequent French hold on Guienne was a foreign conquest. Bordeaux was ruined; St. Emilion deserted. For perhaps two generations the wine people of the Garonne hankered for the good days of the old Plantagenet rule, and it was still regretted a long lifetime later, on the eve of the Reformation.

The loss of France—the ending of that great possibility, a western realm directing the fortunes of Europe—is so much the most important of English events between 1422 and 1450, that I have made it the substance of my pages here. England was ceasing to be one with Northern France, and the event is determinant in her history. But, meanwhile, two things were passing within the country which it is necessary to

[1] Castillon battle was fought at the French entrenched camp on the tongue of land between the Lidoire and the Dordogne.

know if we are to follow the main events about to follow. The first is the Queen Dowager's base affair with one Owen Tudor—and its consequences; the second is the tardy marriage of Henry VI, the king, some six or seven years after the date usual to such alliances at the time.

When Henry V died his widow, Catherine of France, was barely twenty years old. She had borne him this one son, Henry VI. She secretly consoled herself. Shortly after her official bereavement [1] she began to live with a young Welsh fellow about the place, generally called a groom, who happened to have taken her fancy: by name Owen Tidr or Tydr—it is spelt at random. The whole business was, of course, kept very secret by her, for it was disgraceful. It is perhaps some excuse for her that her mother was of the sort we have seen; that her father was off his head; that the man to whom she had been wedded in a purely political alliance, Henry V, was hardly of a sort to inspire affection; that he, on his side, felt apparently even less (he left her at home two days after their marriage); and that their union lasted little more than two years, during all the latter part of which her husband was a dying man. Moreover, it is sometimes oddly pleaded in her favour that this Owen Tudor is found (later) with a very inferior, but at least regular, position in her household—looking after her wardrobe. But this seems a poor ground for royal favour, and even so, it is much more likely that she arranged such a promotion for him after the event than that his duties first brought him to her notice.

The origin of the Tudors.

There is no proof that Catherine even irked her-

[1] The exact date is uncertain. We can only fix an *inferior* limit and say that it was prior to 1428. Her male children by her affair with this servant take part in public life and are knighted in 1449. Further, they are obviously adult in the subsequent fighting. They cannot have been born *later* than 1430-31. On the other hand, they were probably born earlier, for Henry's familiarity with them is that of a contemporary, and when he brings them to court they are presumably no longer children. It is clear that as early as Henry VI's sixth year the Council suspected some lover and took precautions against a marriage.

self with the form of a marriage. Probably she did not ; [1] for the fellow whom she had picked up was no more than an appendage of the sort which ladies of her rank and means permit themselves in moments of corruption, such as our own time and the death of the Middle Ages. His father seems to have been a Welsh follower of the wars, and the family in some way attached as servants to the Bishop of Bangor.[2] Anyhow, there were five children born : three boys—Edmund, the eldest ; Jasper next ; a younger one, Owen, later a Benedictine monk at Westminster ; and two girls.

When this light lady died (in 1437) the two elder boys—probably bastards—had for several years lived as infant half-brothers of the Lancastrian Plantagenet boy, Henry VI.

They had presumably played with him as babies. The Government removed them to other hands as unfitting such companionship. But the gentle Henry VI could not forget

[1] The arguments against any marriage having taken place are so strong that, I think, if the Tudor dynasty were not associated in the modern mind with the Reformation, the legend of Tudor Legitimacy would long ago have been destroyed. They are as follows :—

(1) There is not a trace of contemporary, or even nearly contemporary, evidence of a marriage, nor any tradition even. Only bald assertion very many years later when, under a Tudor dynasty, it would have been exceedingly dangerous to say anything else.

(2) A marriage, however secretly conducted, would necessarily at that time have left ecclesiastical record, and at least one witness. But Catherine's whole object was complete secrecy : and she was successful in that object.

(3) Henry VII, her grandson by Tudor, with every motive for publishing the marriage and discovering evidences of it, never published it, and clearly could never discover evidences of it.

(4) The parchment on which was record of the Council's suspicions of the Queen was at some later time *cut out of the Rolls*, and the contiguous membranes given forged numbers to hide the cheat. That seems to me conclusive.

(5) The Tudor children were officially legitimised. Why, if not illegitimate ?

[2] Later they claimed, like most mountaineers, a prodigious record of descent, intermixed here and there with chiefs of petty clans.

his little half-brothers and playmates, low and unpleasant as was their origin. He had them brought to him at court the moment he could act. It was the making of them. For Henry grew up to be a kindly lad full of sweetness, weak in body and (by fits) in mind, producing an effect of holiness upon those who met him—and holy he was, but subject in later life to passages of complete breakdown. His blood should be remembered : the tainted Lancastrian strain upon his father's side ; the madness of Charles VI of France upon his mother's. And I would ask this unusual question : was his father, Henry V, wholly sane ? I mean the real Henry V, not the Henry V of fiction and our official text-books. Was that high military spirit well balanced when he declared that "war without fire was like meat without mustard," when he passionately and sincerely proclaimed itself a divine instrument and prophesied the permanent alliance of heaven with his plan of conquest ? When he indulged in such passionate devotion to saints and Mass commingled with such deliberate cruelty ? It has always seemed to me that this genius, like many others, had its element of unstable sense.

At any rate, the son, Henry VI, was born to grave weakness of mind. But also to holiness.

Such a man would, of nature, treat his half-brothers, his playmates of childhood, as part of his nursery, as of his blood. He did so. The two elder Tudor boys (the third became a monk at Westminster) in spite of their unpleasant origin, passed, when they grew up, as natural members of the court. Their patron, the king, made them, later, the elder Earl of Richmond, the younger Earl of Pembroke.

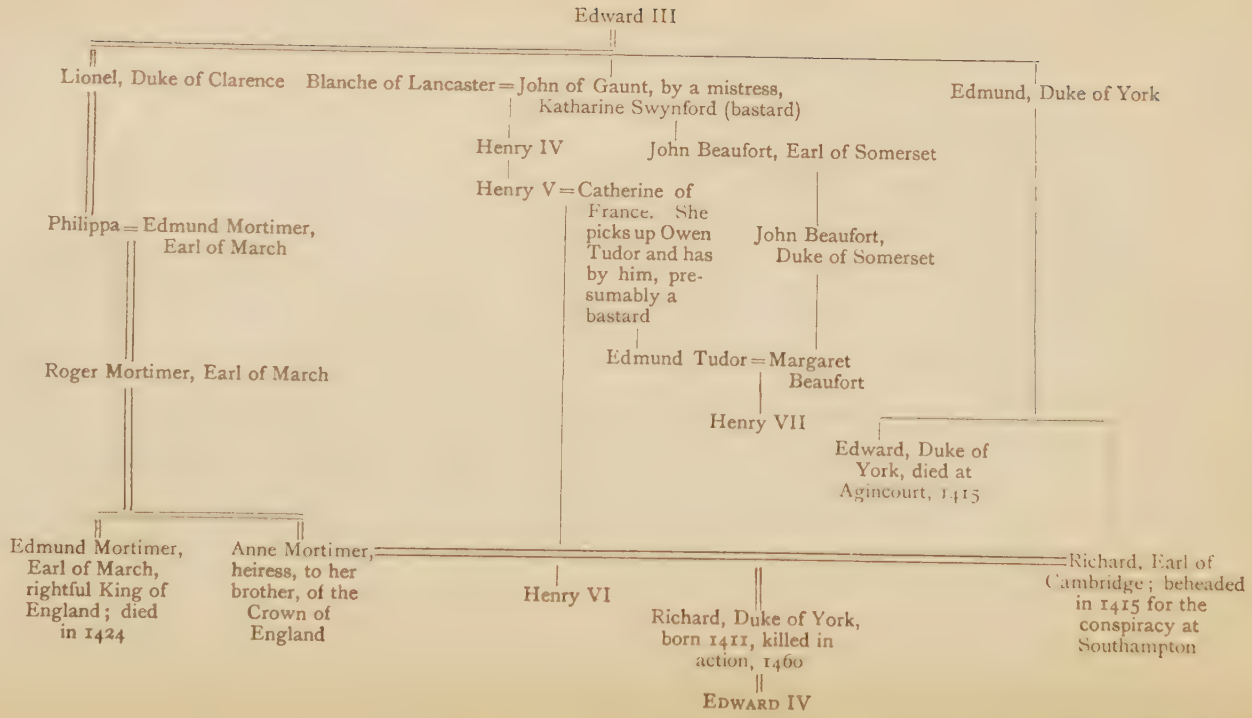
They had been taken young from their mother—as we have seen—and the separation seems to have broken her. The scandal was now out, and her desire was to hide where none could speak of her. She retired to the convent in Bermondsey, and there died, on December 3rd, 1437. In those last days her melancholy was filled with a curious point

of remorse which is worth recording, if only for the pleasure of those who dwell upon the mysterious in human history. There had been an old prophecy that " what Henry of Monmouth should gain Henry of Windsor would lose." Therefore, as the date of her first confinement approached, in the winter of 1421, she was warned not to go to Windsor. But she went, and there was born her son, the heir to France and England. That Henry of Windsor did, indeed, lose what his father Henry of Monmouth had gained. Paris itself had gone in that year when she began brooding at the approach of death—and she but thirty-six years old.

Before Catherine's death—Henry was then only fifteen—the adventurer whom she had picked up was committed to prison by the Council for his dangerous insolence in so connecting himself with the royal blood. But he got men to gamble on his chances of favour when his sons should be a little older, and, as we have seen, he was right. He raised the money to buy himself out. His sons were soon secure in Lancastrian society. Henry, generous and loving, married the elder one of them grandly, if somewhat tardily (in 1455), to one of the Beauforts—Margaret Beaufort, daughter of the Duke of Somerset and niece of the cardinal. Thus were the two lines, one certainly bastard of Katharine Swynford, the other almost certainly bastard of the obscure Owen Tudor, united.

The fruit of that union, the son of Margaret, was to be Henry VII, King of England. But Margaret was too young —fifteen—and therefore remained stunted in growth, while her son, Henry VII, was of ill-health through life—especially in the teeth.

At this point, though we shall have to return to it later, it may be well to show by a table in what a tortuous fashion the base Tudor blood enters English history : the right line of England in double :—


Edward III
Lionel, Duke of Clarence
Blanche of Lancaster
John of Gaunt, by a mistress, Katharine Swynford (bastard)
Edmund, Duke of York
Henry IV
John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset
Henry V
Catherine of France. She picks up Owen Tudor and has by him, presumably a bastard
John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset
Philippa
Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March
Edmund Tudor
Margaret Beaufort
Roger Mortimer, Earl of March
Henry VII
Edward, Duke of York, died at Agincourt, 1415
Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, rightful King of England; died in 1424
Anne Mortimer, heiress, to her brother, of the Crown of England
Henry VI
Richard, Earl of Cambridge; beheaded in 1415 for the conspiracy at Southampton
Richard, Duke of York, born 1411, killed in action, 1460
EDWARD IV

Such is the first point in the domestic history of England during the loss of France: the advent of the Tudor strain into the conduct of the nation. It was to have revolutionary effect; within a lifetime the Plantagenet name was gone, the ancient nobility half replaced and weakened, the quality of English monarchy changed: within a century the loss of English religion had begun.

The marriage of Henry VI and its consequences.

The second domestic point of the period between Joan of Arc and Formigny is the king's marriage, the character of which so largely explains that of the ensuing civil war between the Plantagenet cousins and their supporters.

It will be remembered that, as early as 1439, opinion in England had begun generally to incline to peace. Paris had been lost these three years; the Burgundian alliance had ceased. The position was untenable. The general desire of Englishmen was for an honourable peace, *but for a peace which should retain Normandy*. For Normandy had been longer held than the rest, and had a traditional connection centuries old with the English Crown. Moreover, Normandy was, in 1439, still well—or, at any rate, as yet sufficiently—garrisoned. As for the loss of Gascony—which we have seen to be so sincerely attached to the Plantagenets, having been theirs continuously for 300 years—it was not dreamt of.

Cardinal Beaufort was the leader of the majority which envisaged peace; Gloucester in factious opposition to him. The young king held with Beaufort; and a loyal servitor of the Crown, the same who had commanded at Orleans, William de la Pole, Earl (later Duke) of Suffolk, now, in 1439-40, fifty-two years old, gave sturdy, loyal, and personal support to Henry in all the affair.

After several suggestions, the decision was taken that approach should be made for the hand of Margaret of Anjou, the favourite niece of—almost in the position of daughter to—the King of France, Charles VII. From whichever side the initiative came (perhaps from Orleans), it was a move for permanent peace, and in 1444—Henry being now twenty-two

years old—an embassy sailed for France, with Suffolk at its head, to negotiate the terms of alliance, and to propose for the hand of the princess. Her father, René of Anjou, a cadet of the French royal house (the common ancestor was King John, captured at Poitiers), was rich in inheritance, poor in actual possessions : he was titular King of Jerusalem and the two Sicilies, Duke (or Count) of Anjou (and his brother of Maine), and had rule in other lands. It was his sister who was the French king's wife.

The girl Margaret—then of the age of those royal marriages of the later Middle Ages, fifteen—was gay, high-spirited, witty, already of great beauty, and when she became the mistress of Henry's household, she could not but join in ruling and vigorously resist the intrigues from which the Lancastrian crown was to suffer.

It is morally certain that, as part of the bargain for peace, Anjou and Maine were to be restored to the bride's father and his brother : that is, in vassallage to the King of France. The demand was made, the rumour accepted. But it must be admitted that of contemporary documentary proof there is none. All we can say is that Suffolk meant it, without a doubt, and was morally author of what followed. The transaction did not mean much ; René lived regularly at Angers ; only some points (notably Le Mans itself) were garrisoned by the Plantagenets in Maine. But the surrender was unpopular in England (where Anjou and Maine were called the keys of Normandy), and the most conspicuous agent in the negotiations, Suffolk, became as unpopular as his task.

A truce was arranged in 1444. The next year, in the spring, Margaret was handed over to Richard, Duke of York, Governor of Normandy, at his frontier town of Poissy. She reached Southampton after a very bad crossing, was wedded to Henry in Titchfield Abbey [1] on April 23rd, and was crowned queen at Westminster on May 30th, 1445.

[1] The rich and powerful monastery at the mouth of the Meon on Southampton Water. At the destruction of the Houses under Henry VIII it went, in the loot, to Wriothesley, who built himself a palace of its ruins.

Things began to go ill for Henry's position. The marriage was—as I have noted—late for a mediæval prince of the day: he was in his twenty-fourth year. People wondered why it had been delayed. The surrender of the garrisoned towns in Maine hung fire: the feeling against that surrender cared nothing for the now signed treaty, and for three years the King of France chafed under such a breach of faith; 1448 still saw hesitation in handing over Le Mans. Then came an attack on Fougères, plundered by soldiers and irregulars of Henry's armies in arrears of pay, and there followed that sporadic fighting which led Charles to break the truce in the next year, and to reconquer Normandy.

We have seen what followed. The re-conquest of all Normandy in thirteen months: a sudden and overwhelming blow, shocking to the pride of Englishmen, who had been nurtured on the glories of Henry V.

A further cause of ill-ease was that recurrent one invariably accompanying the ebb of a Plantagenet advance across the Channel: shrinkage of revenue just when revenue is most needed. The whole taxing field of Normandy was gone, and English sources of revenue exhausted. That is why we saw, in the last attempts to hold Normandy, such miserably small contingents, such arrears of pay, so deplorable a lack of artillery.

Now, whenever in a society—even in our modern plutocracies where the organised State is all powerful, and the individual taxpayer is helpless—government demands too much from private wealth, things become unstable.

That alone threatened disaster to the now tottering Lancastrian usurpation. But there was something more. It began to be feared that the marriage of Henry and Margaret's would be barren. There was no one to carry on the usurping line. True, the usurpation had grown old: only men nearing sixty would remember its origin and all who had been soldiers for a lifetime had been soldiers for Lancaster. But in what wars! Witnesses of what disasters!

There was an air of divine vengeance and doom over the

innocent grandson of Henry IV, traitor and regicide, and the family was failing.

Two years had passed since the marriage in Titchfield Abbey, and still no son was born to the Lancastrian line, nor any daughters. It had from the first been guessed; it now became a general opinion that the marriage of the gentle king would go childless, as that of another, saint Edward the Confessor, had been.

Position of Richard, Duke of York.

In such a situation the heir-presumptive was Richard, Duke of York, lately Governor of Normandy. And Richard was not only heir-presumptive: he had, as we have seen (table on p. 220), a better claim to the throne than Henry himself.

But he was not as yet leading an opposition to the vigorous young queen, her husband, and the Beauforts, on whom they relied.

In 1447 the two rivals—but each upholders of Lancaster and high Lancastrians—Cardinal Beaufort and the Duke of Gloucester, died, within six weeks the one of the other (April 11th, February 28th). The latter, it was believed (untruly), by poison.

The whole air was full of rumour against the throne, and what fed it was, of course, the memory of so many disasters in France and the threat of more. The next year was that of the effective cession of Maine, to the added unpopularity of Suffolk; the next, 1449, was Charles VII's breach of the truce and his invasion of Normandy; the next, the end: the loss, in 1450, of every town and castle therein.

England was full of ferment. In the January of 1450, as the army prepared to sail for the relief of Normandy, I have told how Moleyns, the Bishop of Chichester (come to pay the troops) was murdered at Portsmouth: the deed was connected with the arrears of pay, but it was also due to his having been an agent in the giving up of Maine. Then came the impeachment by the factions of the noble, devoted, statesmanlike Suffolk—the king and queen's most strenuous servant: a man now fifty-four years of age: Henry and the

queen thought to save him by ordering his exile. He obeyed, went to his estates, wrote a noble letter to his child, which remains to us, and sailed for the continent. As he crossed to France in exile the mutinous captain of a *royal* ship (ominous sign) seized him and had him murdered off Dover (May 2nd, 1450) in a boat on the high seas; some one in power at court must have planned the murder. Then on the heels of that came a wild rebellion in Kent under one who called himself Mortimer, and was known as Jack Cade—it was suppressed because it was anarchic, and Cade, isolated, was caught and killed. But his programme had been political: the name of "Mortimer" had gone round. No man knew what might not follow.

Death of Suffolk, May 2nd, 1450.

For Richard, Duke of York, lay in the background, a possible (and the legitimate) king: a true Plantagenet, and through his mother, the senior in blood.

Perhaps under the young queen's influence—she relied on the personal friends of Henry and the Lancastrian blood—Somerset, the head of the Beauforts, had asked for the command in France, and had obtained it, ousting Richard of York, who was sent to command in Ireland. Thus York was spared the odium of the last surrenders, while Somerset in person accorded them, as we have seen, to the victorious French. It was Somerset who had handed over his sword to Charles VII at Caen. With Somerset returned to England after the loss of Normandy (August, 1450): under such a weight of public hatred as the chief man at Henry's side: with Richard of York still remembered as the successful Governor of Normandy in better times—all the elements of civil war were prepared. York, viceroy in Ireland over that narrow pale to which Lancastrian abandonment had reduced English power in the island, had become popular with his subjects. As an alternative to Suffolk and Somerset, he was popular in England. Without leave, in an act of rebellion, he crossed to England.

Somerset, returned from the loss of Normandy, is a rival to Richard of York, returned from the government of Ireland, August, 1450.

With Richard's sudden abandonment of Ireland and landing in England the Wars of the Roses had begun.

III

The Change

III

THE CHANGE

Character of the Last Lifetime of the Middle Ages : Transition from the Middle Ages to Modern Times

THE last lifetime of the Middle Ages may conveniently be taken as beginning in the year 1450. Whether we make it end with the protests of Luther in 1517, or (in the particular consideration of English history) with the beginning of Henry VIII's Roman quarrel in 1527, it corresponds to the long lifetime of a man. Certain of the generation who were little children in 1450 lived to see in extreme old age the shipwreck of Christendom : they were the last habitants of the Middle Ages.

It is a period of peculiar character. It is the end of a great and complex culture, which had flourished mightily for 500 years, and whose strong and simple foundation went back 500 years beyond that into the height of the Dark Ages. It is the deplorable death of what had been very great, and had for a time promised order and happiness to men. Yet at every step in the change we find ourselves thinking much more of the modern than of the mediæval time. One of those vivid miniatured landscapes of the late xvth century ; an early printed book ; a battle full of guns ; a sea discovery with its chart—all these have for us modern people a sort of odd, premature cousinship. We see already apparent those things to which we are accustomed : but we see them still mixed in with the stuff of the dying Middle Ages.

For instance, we find ourselves by the mid-xvth century

in the midst of what the Middle Ages never had—documentary criticism : the laborious examination of a text with the object of discovering from it exact history, and, by the use of that, correcting legend. We find ourselves face to face with portraits in painting, in bronze, and in stone, the whole object of which, successfully achieved, is a minute, particular, living realism. You do know exactly what Henry VII looked like, and exactly what Edward IV looked like. You do not know with any such precision what Henry IV looked like, or even Richard II, for all his fine effigy. The xvth century is, for the first time since the pagans of old, a gallery of portraits. And there is a point which, though it may seem a minor one, is not to be neglected. Features became more comprehensible to us. The expressions of the face, more alive than is usual now (for the time was still under the activities of the Middle Ages, though of the Middle Ages in their agony), are such as we catch to-day in flashes among our own contemporaries.

Again, there is an international European diplomacy, startlingly and even shockingly resemblant to our modern murderous intrigues, though Europe was still united.

There was not, indeed, anything novel about the idea of intrigue and double play between courts and governments : that is as old as human society. But with this turning-point in the xvth century a sort of professional cunning arises, a continuous career of deception undertaken by men who become expert at the trade. This is due to the crystallising of separate political societies which we have come at last to regard as sovereign states, the existence or even power of which is, to their citizens, of more moment than Christian civilisation itself. This splitting up of the old unity of Europe into wholly independent fragments—this new "religion of nationality"—was but beginning with the great Change. It affected various provinces in different degrees : England early and strongly, and France, as it united under Louis XI, also ; Spain, after the union of Castille and Aragon and the expulsion of the Moors ; the Low Countries in a

vaguer manner. In Italy the idea of nationhood failed; among the Germans it was as yet unknown.

There was not to come for centuries the full fruit of this disruptive emotion, absolute nationhood, and it is only in our own day that the dogma of national sanctity has been pushed to its extreme, and worshipped in France, Germany, England, and America with a blind devotion which threatens to destroy the whole culture of our world. But with the XVth century that sentiment is already conscious. The populace feel it in Joan of Arc, and she in them. It moves Englishmen to the murder of Suffolk, and Scotsmen to repeated service against English arms abroad or at home. It is a rising mood which gives to this passage between the mediæval and the modern its individual mark.

This last lifetime of the Middle Ages has about it a great number of other co-ordinating features in the arts and in political structure which render it thus individual. It is the moment when in every State the Prince achieves strongly centralised personal power. It is the moment when the art of war with the use of artillery takes on, somewhat suddenly, a new character. It is the moment when the previous generations' discovery of classical texts flowers into the literary Renaissance. But, above all, it is the moment when the Papacy, which had been the centre, and in a way the principle, of life throughout the Middle Ages, takes on a new part, to its own great hurt at the time, and to the permanent wounding of Europe. For it is almost coincidently with this date, 1450, that the Papacy becomes a secure Italian principate, and correspondingly diminishes in spiritual effect upon men. Hitherto the Papacy had been either the growing thing of the Dark Ages or the splendid central spiritual monarchy of the true Middle Ages, under the dominating names of St. Gregory VII and of the two Innocents; or a thing divided, harried, but still, on that very account—that is, through its insecurity—moving men to rally to it, even when they only rallied in a conflict of partisans. But now, with the mid-XVth century, a

new political character in the Papacy appears. After the election of Nicholas V in 1447, and the resignation of the anti-Pope Felix in 1449, the era of rivalry and schism is over. No Councils challenge the Popes or claim the right to depose them. The Popes are permanently and securely in Rome ; they have the stability of temporal monarchs. They enjoy revenues not only from the universal Church but local, from their Italian subjects, both incomes are large and both reasonably steady.

The Popes of the dying Middle Ages, of the awakening Renaissance, develop a policy which is in its own way a national policy, quite as much as that of the Kings of France, of England, or of Spain. One might have thought that the conclusion of so great a story in so placid a harbour would have been to the advantage of its chief actors, and that with the Papacy, at last unmolested and universally rich, regnant in its own city, the Popes would have risen to heights of executive power and to opportunities for the strengthening of the unity of Europe which their predecessors had never known.

The results were exactly contrary. The Papacy, thus becoming in the eyes of Christian men an Italian principate, ceased in that degree to be papal, Catholic, universal.

It continued indeed to preach with Christian patriotism, the necessity for a crusade. The Mohammedan was pressing us hard. He had destroyed the Christian Greek empire, seized Byzantium, and might in the next age have overwhelmed us but for the resistance of Vienna and for the great victory of Lepanto. Yet the Popes could never get the Christian princes to join in that crusade, though it was a matter of life and death ; and their refusal to act in so vital a matter was not only due to their rivalries among themselves, but in part (though the part may be exaggerated) to the jealousy they had of the Papacy as a mundane Italian power. If on the eve of the Reformation, with Islam at the gate and all Christendom in peril, the King of the French

would not move for fear of the King of the Germans, nor the King of the Germans for fear of the King of the French, it was also true that each said to himself, " A victory in the Adriatic would increase the power of the Pope as a temporal sovereign, and would threaten my own designs in Italy."

It was the same new condition of the Papacy which led to those dynastic arrangements for its succession which to-day we deplore, but which in that time seemed so natural. Since the Popes were priests and celibate, and could have no legitimate inheritants, the working in of their families, their collaterals, their nephews, relatives, and dependants became the chief business of their court. The successor of Nicholas V, Callistus III, was the uncle of that great sovereign and evil-liver, Alexander VI ; Pius III, an ephemeral figure, is the nephew of Æneas Sylvius, Pius II ; Paul II the nephew of Eugenius IV—all in the course of under fifty years. One Pope after another is related in this way to a predecessor during that fatal last lifetime of the Middle Ages—the lifetime that made the Reformation possible.

The Papacy as an Italian principate not only became thus alien to the subjects of other monarchs—a foreign power like another—it not only took on the character of a temporal State, lowering itself by nepotism and the pushing of relatives, dependants, and bastards ; but it took on, for good as well as for evil, the other characters of a lay monarchy. It had, during this fatal period of security and worldliness, a very high tradition of patronage in the arts ; the Popes even more than the other Italian rulers may be said to have *made* the full Renaissance. They were from the beginning of this period, from Nicholas V himself, the most active supporters of that scholarship, the accompanying scepticism of which could not but threaten the whole system upon which the Papacy itself was founded.

I feel, when I read of that eager patronage, just the irony which I feel when I remember any one in the other scores of self-destructive efforts in the course of human story : James II

watching his own defeat from the Norman cliffs at the hands of that British navy which he had created, and which, but for him, could never have shown such power: the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, attacked with that very Scripture which it had preserved for mankind, and the authority of which derived from the Church, and from the Church alone. For the Papacy it was, more than any other government, which exalted, subsidised, rewarded, humanism, the search for the manuscripts of the classics, the spirit of documentary criticism, and all that flood which, turned into a new channel, was to undermine the spiritual defences of Christendom.

Valla had written his not very convincing, but at the time effective, attack upon the authenticity of the *Donation* (which had once been used as a sort of charter for the temporal power of the Popes, though *not* the origin of that power at all, and, indeed, not even used as an argument till long after its appearance) in 1440. And who is the chief patron of Valla? Nicholas V himself, acceding seven years later. The enormous work of Poggio, with its perpetual discovery of new classical texts, from the first Ciceronian batch in the year of Agincourt to the histories of Tacitus in the days of Joan of Arc's first victories, continued on till after 1450. Poggio did not die till 1559. Aurispa, the man who had come from Constantinople with his whole cargo of Greek manuscripts, died in the same year.

When we turn from this political centre, the example and pivot of all Europe, the Papacy, to the field of the West as a whole, we find the same new character about the age. It is the moment when the Burgundian hold upon the Netherlands is transforming that chief centre of commerce and industry and wealth in Europe, and nourishing in its fine active city-states a local spirit which was to eat out the power of Spain in the following century. This development of the Netherlands is strikingly characteristic of the time. You see it in all the arts and in the economic structure. You see it in the Van Eyks, you see it in the wealth

of architecture—and especially of wood-carving ; you see it in the new university spirit, starting from the foundation of Louvain, twenty-four years before the mid-century ; in the banking at Bruges, the corn-market of Ghent, the new mercantile strength of Antwerp and Amsterdam. The long reign of Philip the Good, the powerful informative spirit of his son, Charles the Bold (though he only held his stormy power for ten years), were what formed the Netherlands. We must not only think of Burgundy as the rival of the French monarchy, defeated by the tenacity and intrigue of Louis XI ; we must also think of it as that which made what still endures ; a central spirit in the West : a Rhine-Delta, and lower Rhineland culture, neither French nor German : yet in a way more French than German, for during that Burgundian formation of the Low Countries, you have the chronicles in the French tongue, the seat of a French-speaking court in Brussels, and the laying down of that French foundation for the culture of the Rhenish state which, to-day attacked, will not easily be destroyed.

And even as I speak of this typical Burgundian thing, the Netherlands, an example of the close of the Middle Ages, I may here remark in them what we find everywhere else (except in England)—the corruption of the Church. It is illustrated here by the capture of the great Church endowments by the kings and the nobles. Thus, Philip the Good himself puts two of his bastards successively into the lordly bishopric of Liége, a quasi-independent state ; into that of Cambrai, his own illegitimate brother.

Our time is—or was till yesterday, and still is in its older generation—materialist. It instinctively looks in history for material causes to explain revolutions of the mind. That is an error. The mind moves first. The rapid dissolution of the Middle Ages in the Renaissance was the work of the spirit of man, not of his instruments. But material conditions limit, mould, and deflect the spiritual stuff on which they play, and it would be a poor summary of the Change

which said nothing of two material factors of powerful effect in that critical moment : printing from movable type, and the new artillery. Of the two, printing appeared with the less preparation and more suddenly affected the world.

We owe the mixed evil and advantage of that new art to the vigorous life of the Rhine valley and Delta, that highway of ideas and things from South to North.

Some put forth a difficult claim for the Netherlands, but all fix the outset of Printing in this belt of land.

The earliest piece of work printed from movable type of which we have certain evidence is dated 1454, with a manuscript note referring to the 15th November of that year. The first complete printed book (a Bible dating from the two years next following) was by John Gutenberg, working in the city of Mayence. It does not follow that Gutenberg was the first man to print from movable type, but he was the first man whose work we can be certain of. There are other more or less improbable traditions, and long before movable type was thought of in the West, printing from wooden blocks with ink on paper had been known, and might even be said to be common. Such work was not pictorial alone but also accompanied with lettering, only the lettering was graven in solid on the wooden block and not from type. There is at least this in favour of Gutenberg's claim to genius : he lived permanently in debt and died bankrupt.

Apart from all the doubt about origins, it is pretty clear that the new art was a German art and spread from German centres, although there is mention of some kind of stamping or printing at Avignon ten years before the earliest remaining example of Gutenberg's work. We have no means of showing that the Avignon experiment was made from movable type, as we know it only by an allusion. When the new instrument came first to Italy (about ten years after the early printing on the Rhine) we know that the Germans of the Rhine introduced it ; when it reached Paris six years later, again we find that the first three printers mentioned had

German names. Caxton himself acquired his knowledge of such matters in the Low Countries, in Bruges perhaps, in Cologne certainly, and it is worth remarking that the first English book printed by him, "The Game and Play of Chess," was set up, not here, but in the Low Countries just before he came over to Westminster. What is also worth remarking as highly characteristic of the time is the trilingual character of these first English texts—they are English, French, and Latin.

In this invention, as in so much else of the great change, England was behind the clock in the xvth century, on account of her civil wars, the Wars of the Roses.

It was in the late autumn of 1477, in November of that year, that this William Caxton, a Kentish man, then already well advanced in life and perhaps fifty-five years old, brought out, on a press set up somewhere near Westminster Abbey, the first printed book issued in this country. Its very title is characteristic of the new English which had established itself so firmly as the universal tongue of the country during the preceding 100 years, and which had been for much more than a lifetime the talk of all classes below the court. It is called "The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers," and in those six words two are Romance,[1] three—the linking words "of," "and," "the" of an original Teutonic stock—

[1] Of greater interest, as an example of the current language of the time, because it was addressed by Caxton to the man in the street as an advertisement, is his appeal to the public to buy his next book, the Use of Salisbury, that is the Salisbury missal ordinal. It is both an example of the way in which the new language was the very language we use to-day and of its double origin. The passage transliterated into our spelling of to-day, leaving the words otherwise exactly as they were, is as follows: "If it please any man spiritual or temporal to buy any piece of two or three commemorators of Salisbury Use, imprinted after the form of this present letter which be well and truly correct, let him come to Westminster into the Almonry at the Red Pale" [that is, the sign of the house] "and so have them good cheap." Here we have fifty-four words, of which sixteen are of the Romance origin, one perhaps doubtful, and all these sixteen are the significant ones of the phrase. Further, we see the loss of the old inflections. What is most important,—the order of the words is that of the civilised South, not of the old barbaric North.

and one, "sayings," of an entirely Teutonic form, but probably deriving from the corruption of a Latin original.

It is characteristic again of our culture that the original of the book was French—Lord Rivers translated it.

The introduction of printing helped and accelerated the transformation going on in European culture, but it is not always appreciated exactly what effect it had.

The first and most obvious thing to say about it, which every one has said, and said quite truly, is that it made for the wide dissemination of any one popular text. Since the Catholic Church had made of the Bible the chief piece of literature in Western Europe, printing made, in time, for the dissemination of that particular text, and for its dissemination in the vernacular wherever a vernacular translation existed. It also made for the dissemination of any opinion or comment or news *or Order* which could both get into print and be widely distributed. But when that is said, not all is said ; the new instrument of communication also began from the first—or, at any rate, before the end of its first generation of users—*to create a new sort of false Authority*. We have seen that effect of printing swell in our own time out of all recognition until it may almost be said to rule the modern herd.

The point is a subtle one : difficult to express. It will need a certain digression, and I fear to weary the reader with its exposition. Yet is it essential that any one who would follow the story of Europe should grasp it : for that strange effect of the Printed Word has had prodigious results. It has transformed the government of mankind, put power into incongruous hands, and is still in process of burdening the world. It has divorced us from reality.

Until the invention of printing no statement could be seen in its original form, or identically reproduced from its original form, by more than a small number of people. It could be *heard* by a very large number through criers or heralds ; but having heard it the recipient could not, save in

particular cases (legal records, etc.), refer to his authority. Therefore a statement passing from lip to lip, repeated, transformed by innumerable minds, came to have two qualities about it: the first was a greater or less degree of distortion which was to the disadvantage of true knowledge; but the second was an advantage to judgment: such popular appreciation was multiple *and alive*. With the invention of printing there began, and gradually spread until it has reached our modern extravagance, that action of the mind whereby, an original text becoming known to very many in precisely the same form and striking so many minds almost simultaneously, and being available for general reference, Authority irrationally attaches to it. Let a man hear from a herald or from a public letter read, that 10,000 were slain in a recent battle, that 10,000 may double or treble in passing from mouth to mouth, but doubters will be present who will criticise the exaggeration. Discussion will arise which cannot be put down by a reference. New witnesses will come with their various versions. As I have said, all the qualities of *life* will attach to the thing related. The affirmation will have less precision about it but more elasticity; its principle will count more than its detail—and, meanwhile, average men will remain with judgment in suspense, as they commonly do about things which they only hear of and have not seen. Now print is seen. A man who has seen set out in letters the affirmation of a thing half feels that he has seen the thing itself. When, through the art of printing, very many see that same affirmation, the illusion of certitude becomes general.

Let the same identical statement, in exactly the same words, strike thousands of men simultaneously and the mere affirmation will, by most, be as devoutly believed as though it were an actual experience. All our fellows have not only heard it, but seen it in the same form, and it acquires instantaneous power.

And there is further this to be remarked: each man

receives the effect in isolation, uncorrected for the moment —sometimes for long—by the comments of others ; nor can the reader reply to print as he can to the living speaker. The first reaction, then, of the reader to printed affirmation is a blind acceptance, such as he does not give to a spoken statement or comment : and that acceptance may be very widespread : may rapidly become universal to a whole society.

This consequence of the new art (which is most insufficiently noted in our histories) had very marked effect upon the society of Christendom before the men who, as children, were first taught to read printed matter had grown to old age.

For instance, printing played a great part in the making of the new tyrannical monarchies whose proclamations and orders struck their subjects universally through the new, widely distributed medium of appeal. To the authority of the prince was added the authority of the printed word.

Again, it had a profound effect in increasing the appeal to Scripture as against the living authority of the Church. That effect lasted for centuries. Until quite lately one could still hear the strange argument (perhaps one hears it still, in remote places), " I will not believe this, for I do not find it in the Bible." It is—or was—connected in the confused mind of the speaker with the idea that since the printed word of his Bible is invariable, therefore it has a certain fixed authority of its own superior to the judgment of any living and teaching body. The appeal to Scripture as against the Church had, of course, been since the first century a necessary part of attack on Christian unity, but it gained in power after the invention of printing, or rather by the time the use of printing had soaked into the mass of the people,—round about 1500, some fifty years or more after its first appearance. The appeal to Scripture against living authority was a necessary device on the part of malcontents throughout the centuries, from Marcion to Berengarius, from Berengarius to Waldo, from Waldo to Wycliffe, from Wycliffe to Huss. Their grievances could find echo in the hearts of

many—but not their argument, until there came in support the Authority of the Printed Word: unanswerable, because deaf, dumb, and blind.

This authority of printing takes on another form (the subject is inexhaustible): it gives to the permanent legal statute a new and highly enhanced value *for the public.*

There has always been among men a sanctity of custom; and custom, or a code embodying it, might be registered when letters became known. With printing, such an official comment or regulation was accessible at any hour to any number of citizens, and any number of such orders or comments were so accessible. Law, therefore, and the idea that a thing must be either legal or illegal, that legality could be very strictly defined, and that it had an existent form wherein it could always be tested, took on a wholly new strength in the State. Professional lawyers had always maintained this, but now the public believed them. This was not an early effect of that new social function of printing, such as the other effects I have just mentioned. It came later; for during the turmoil of the XVIth century there were forces to counteract it. But by the XVIIth century the effect is very apparent. You see it in the appeals of the rebels against the crown in England. "There it is in Magna Carta: no taxation without grant from the Council. There it is in print. Look for yourself!" And the poor dupe looks for himself and murmurs, "True enough! There it is in print!" And he believes it.

Lastly, it must be noted that the princes of the transition from the Middle Ages each more or less rapidly got the new instrument into their hands. The King of England, for instance, licensed its use and controlled it. Henry VIII could have printed, or not printed, exactly what he chose, confining the Press to his controlled places. The results were of a kind which we to-day find it difficult to imagine—they will perhaps be understood in the despotisms of to-morrow.

Thus here, in England, nothing could be printed and

circulated with any success save at and from the licensed presses of London and Oxford. When the spoken voice and the manuscript were the media, criticism of authority was comparatively facile, however much repressed by sporadic cruelty, but when men had come to rely upon the printed word, then a government which could permit or absolutely prevent a piece of printing, and which concentrated printing into very few well-controlled centres, had quite a new power. Such a power Henry VIII could exercise before, after, and during his policy of schism ; and it largely helps to explain its success, and even that of the much more unpopular policy of his brothers-in-law after his death, and of those who, with the Cecils at their head, managed his daughter Elizabeth.

One may sum up and say that the new art of printing was solvent of the free mediæval civilisation in another unsuspected way, besides its obvious effect in the rapid dissemination of fact and falsehood. For the rapid dissemination of fact and falsehood has been a feature in many cultures which had not even a script let alone movable type : it is remarkable among primitive savages ; but what printing did was to substitute for the old living authority a new immovable authority of its own which singularly strengthened the power of governments and of accepted texts.

The importance of artillery as a material condition of the new world that was so rapidly appearing in the mid-xvth century is less than that of printing, but more than is commonly observed. Gunpowder (or rather, a much later thing, the efficient use of gunpowder in war), before men really knew what had happened, with an effect far greater than even those who benefited by it were able to understand, with a result only slowly revealed after more than a long lifetime to the governments of Christendom, centralised the national authorities and destroyed the relics of feudalism. Gunpowder did this not by the hand weapon, but by cannon.

Very much else, of course, went to that result, and we

must never exaggerate the value of a material cause, but this particular material cause is, oddly enough, under-rated, and that on account of our natural tendency to read our own conditions into the past. We think in terms of the commonest missile weapon. Till the Great War gunpowder meant for modern men especially the rifle and before the rifle the musket. We therefore carry with us, in our judgment of the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times, the idea of fire-arms in the hands of the individual replacing the less-efficient bows and arrows of his predecessors.

The change was not of that nature at all. Long before the fire-arm of the individual soldier had acquired sufficient safety, precision, and rapidity to make it what it was in the XVIIIth century, let alone the XIXth, gunpowder had done its most effective work in quite another shape. It had destroyed the independence, through destroying the defensive, of the Nobles and of the Walled Towns. It had, with *cannon* (not hand weapons) outranged the bow and battered down the walls of castles.

The power of cannon to do this came from three qualities —its comparative precision, its range, and the regularity of its effect.

Before the siege-piece had been developed as a fairly reliable arm, a city or a castle wall was attacked in one of five ways, usually combined in various stages: (1) There were hurled against it from great catapults depending upon the release of twisted ropes, large lumps of stone: the range and effect were most irregular; (2) It was battered with great rams, but these had to be brought close up and defended as best could be with great sheds of wood, lengthy to construct, and very vulnerable to the defence; (3) It could be sapped, a usual method being to prop up the wall with balks of timber as the sapping proceeded, and then to burn these so that the wall might collapse; (4) There was direct attack: the fighting men seeking to enter by ruse or treachery, or the finding of an undefended point, or rushing the obstacle with scaling

ladders ; (5) There was a starving out of the garrison by a prolonged blockade.

Probably, if a statistic could be made, the latter would be found the most commonly successful method of the true Middle Ages. At any rate, until the end of that period the walled town, and still more the castle, had an astonishing power of resistance, and any man or community having the materials and able to escape the action of authority while he was building, could make himself impregnable—so did the great nobles, so did nearly all cities (though these were far more vulnerable), so did the king with his garrison-places, which were perpetually disputed between him and his feudal inferiors.

I have described in my last volume what fundamental effect this power of the defensive had on all early mediæval warfare. All that warfare is determined by the castle and town wall, and so it remains right down to the rather sudden development of cannon in French hands in the few years before 1450. It was cannon which drove the Plantagenet garrisons out of Normandy and of Guienne, and the new cannon in great numbers that massacred their archers.

Already, earlier, the fire-arm had brought in the beginnings of change. It was of little or no effect at first in the field. It is not at all certain that Edward III used small cannon at Crécy, and if he did, they were certainly of no effect. But he did use gunpowder in the siege of Calais, and thenceforward in English history, as in all that of Western Europe, you will see its effect growing, and always against walls. If the development was slow, it was due to two causes. First, that the ingredients for the making of gunpowder were not always easy to obtain, and were not always pure, and that the art of mixing them only gradually attained perfection. Secondly, that the gun itself took a long time to become a safe instrument of war for its user. Any bad streak or flaw in the metal led to its bursting ; the keeping to an exact calibre was difficult, and that again was

a cause of inaccuracy in fire and loss of power. Cannons that were hooped as a safeguard against bursting were not secure. They were long unreliable. Lastly, the delivery from the heavy pieces was slow ; the number of pieces also were insufficient on account of the difficulty of manufacture. Thus we find even Dover in the xvth century with no more than six.

Wherever central government was reasonably strong it came at last to possess a monopoly of artillery. A formidable insurrectionary movement, with many wealthy men at its head and a large industrial basis from which to work, could provide its own artillery against the king ; but, normally, the princes of the end of the Middle Ages, that is the governments, had the monopoly of gunpowder and the monopoly of guns with which to use it, just as they came, normally, to have a monopoly of control over the Press. Against such a monopoly the last remnant of the individual feudal power went down. It went down very slowly. In France fragments of it survived to the middle of the xviith century. But to go down at last it was compelled.

As against large armed bodies of the old type, popular levies or revolts of the masses, gunpowder as a monopoly in government hands might be supreme. It was the saving of Henry VII when his cannon mowed down the unfortunate Cornishmen to the south of London, and it was the saving of his son against the seething popular fury aroused by Thomas Cromwell's destruction of the monks. It was the confirmation of his power in Ireland.

As we shall see in the next volume, though it was necessary for Henry VIII to obtain delay against the Catholic rebellion, yet, once that delay was obtained, what rendered their effort hopeless was the bringing up of cannon.

Such was the character of that turnover from the old to the new, of which the year 1450 is the characteristic date.

A new art in the portrayal of men, a discovery of pagan antiquity and a flooding with its work and thought through

the bringing to light of forgotten manuscripts, a beginning of return to its columns and its statuary—also to its sensual delight—a universal discovery, a universal questioning, marked all that time. Artillery, almost suddenly developed into a master-arm, helped to make the great kings and ruined archery. Printing began to change the world and to make men go in droves. With all this we must see the actors of the Change dressed in gold and crimson and delighting in a riot of capricious cuts and fashions, their heraldry a labyrinth of terms, forms, and colours (their shields were all but discarded now, and had become rather palettes for emblazonry), their armour a museum of heavy plate, their titles of honour a conscious mummery less and less connected with the districts from which they were drawn. But the whole is full of fancy, and the Middle Ages went down in a fantastic glory.

If that is what we should see in Europe as a whole during the transition, what do we note particularly in England ?

England during this last lifetime is politically a thing alternately weakened before Europe by civil war and then, in the later part of it, strengthened into a despotism under a new dynasty with little title and organised in a new social system. It is a social system in which chieftainship is quite dead.

If we look below the surface of the dynastic civil war which we call the Wars of the Roses, and the political machinery which the first Tudor set up and on which (but for the Reformation) a permanently strong monarchy might have been founded, we find everywhere the same thing: a transformation of the English Middle Ages. The last elements of their feudalism disappear, the wealthy yeoman and the squire, the merchant in the town, the maker and the seller of cloth are, in their mass, the strongest thing in the State after the king. The bulk of Englishmen have grown too weak—an effect of the Lancastrian evil. The very great families continue, and as yet there is no considerable admix-

ture among them of new wealth. But they have no longer their old armed power. England has changed. It had been in the true Middle Ages a country where popular monarchy had great semi-sovereigns beneath it, almost its equal: far below them, and following them, the one-manor men, the squires: below these the villeins, the mass of the nation. It had now become a country where the popular monarchy had revived and had about it great lords: but these no longer local half-kings: powerful rather as a class and through wealth. Below them the one-manor men, the squires, had been made more powerful by the deliberate policy of the Lancastrian usurpers. The peasantry were now divided into yeomen of substance, supporters of the squires, and the much greater numbers, the mass of the nation who would never again have a voice in the affairs of England.

And here we may remark in passing what we shall deal with in some detail in speaking of Henry VII and his government, the fact that the lowering of the power of the great nobles was not due, as is often represented, to loss of life during the Wars of the Roses. There were fifty-three lay lords in the Parliament of the mid-century. At the very end of Edward IV's reign in the last Parliament he summoned, there were forty-five. It is true that there were only twenty-nine when Henry VII summoned the first gathering to support his most insecure throne, but that was because many who might have been summoned happened to be under age, and because so many more, as an effect of the late wars, were attainted; but the normal average of half a hundred was reached later on.

No, it was not the deaths in fighting or by massacre during the Wars of the Roses that lessened the power of the old nobility. It was artillery; it was the independence of the wealthier yeomen; it was the increasing number of executive functions discharged by the gentry everywhere as Justices of the Peace. The whole structure of feudalism, retaining its old terms, had none the less ceased to be. It

had been replaced in the stuff of society by a broad oligarchy, still in great awe of the king.

The king was able to establish a strong personal system of government, not, indeed, without fear of rebellion, but without fear of feudal rebellion, without fear, that is, of rebellion as the mere act of great local magnates who had whole districts under their direct obedience. The king's monopoly of gunpowder, the king's monopoly of artillery, were supplemented by the king's formation of central courts of justice serving the crown, directly monarchic, which none, therefore, could bully or corrupt, and which were wholly in his hands.

After the Wars of the Roses a small committee of the chief men of his Council, gathered in the room called the Star Chamber, acted as an executive responsible to the king alone, summoned and judged, fined and gave sentence, without the use of any of the old local machinery. And in this, in all the principle of unity and of social security, there was a new, prosperous, and united body behind the crown: another part of the nation, the bulk of it, not yet dispossessed was politically silent. The standard of living was high, the wealth of the country, at any rate towards the end of the period, remarkable in the eyes of foreigners, and one may fairly say that the last lifetime of the Middle Ages in England was a moment of material well-being for this country, in spite of the base origins of its dynasty and the loss of its revenue from abroad, with the loss of French land—for Calais alone remained.

Efforts have been made, especially in recent years, to confuse this picture by a legend that the old Lollard ferment, the spiritual fever of the late XIVth and early XVth centuries, in England continued on to the moment of the Reformation. We hear such phrases as that it was "driven underground," but that its "tradition was handed on," and the rest of it. All that kind of thing is bad history, written, as bad history always is, to a brief, and not from the observation of reality.

The fact is that England was almost entirely free in the

last lifetime before the Reformation from doctrinal trouble. There was great dislike of clerical dues, and a strong desire to be relieved of them, with a corresponding anti-clericalism, especially in London. There was at the close of the period a vigorous humanistic criticism directed against the routine of the old scholastic teaching; but of disgust with or protest against the great Christian doctrines, notably the Eucharist, there was hardly any. You have the very interesting, the very typical character of Peacock, the Welshman who was Bishop of Chichester in 1450, orthodox, but basing his orthodoxy on rationalism, and, by the way, like Valla, an early critic of the *Donation*. But there is no sign of any popular feeling. The Lollard disturbance died its natural death as the generation which witnessed it grew old and passed away. One Goos is burned in 1474, and two heretics of a sort suffered under Edward IV; at the very end of the period an old woman in 1494, and another individual in 1500; a priest, though repentant, suffers in Canterbury a couple of years earlier. In Norwich during that whole lifetime you get one case, and another in Salisbury. And in 1506 there is a rising of some obscure kind of local sectaries in the woods of the Chilterns, where two or three are punished. But of anything like a tradition, let alone a system of heresy, of anything significant, let alone widespread, there is no trace. England of the mid and latter xvth century is spiritually united, under a hierarchy better, upon the whole, than you will find in neighbouring and rival lands, and with a church system less corrupt in an exceedingly corrupt time. Some of the great monasteries had lost their discipline and needed visitation: not a few of the great churchmen were rather temporal officials than priests in character. But Wycliffism (to use a clumsy term) is quite patently dead. And there is no chain of connection between it and the imported various and confused German protests, received only by a small body of intellectuals, in the first quarter of the xvith century.

What the mid-xvth century did peculiarly produce in England, distinguishing its society from that of the neighbouring continent, was the new weight of the old "one-manor men": the landed gentry, the village lords.

All that lifetime (fifty years) of usurpation can, as I have said, be expressed in terms of the weakness of Henry IV's original title: the fact that he had broken the true succession to the crown. But though that was the cause, the effects had consequences not connected with it and covering all the subsequent history of England.

Henry had to beg for help where a man in a sound position would have commanded obedience. He had to give the official churchmen undisputed power without attempting to remedy their evils. The fully organised action against heresy begins in his reign as a fixed part of policy, and though the burning of the lapsed heretic or apostate was not unknown in the past, it is from the Lancastrians that it becomes statute law. But it is tainted with another motive than orthodoxy: the defence of worldly power in unworthy men. Much more important than Lancastrian bowing to the officials of the Church, which after all would always have had much the same power (though perhaps a little restrained under a legitimate king), was the confirming of the rapidly growing power of the lesser gentry. The Lancastrian usurpation is the moment from which the natural predominance of this class in the petty justice of the country districts becomes defined, and the institution of the Justice of the Peace is found. It is under Henry IV and his two successors that the same class, in its character of Knights of the Shire in the Commons, is deferred to, and that the Lower House acquires certain set privileges which it ought never to have had. They depress the people. They rival the crown. For instance, there is the solemn affirmation in the first year of Henry IV's reign that the assent of the Commons is required by the king to a statute; that entry of record should be made in the presence of a deputation from themselves as

well as from the Lords. This strengthening of the squires and the merchants in the House of Commons came also from the dynasty's perpetual requirements in money. In that short time between 1399 and 1413 its founder had had eight grants of a tenth of movables and eight of a fifteenth, and though their definite demand that a favourable answer to petition should come before supply failed to be accepted, yet as the reign went on supply was appropriated and watched, not only by the magnates, but by deputations from the Commons.

It is an exaggeration to ascribe the strength of all this to the weakness of Henry's throne, and it would be still more of a mistake to say that the strong aristocratic quality of the English State which developed hundreds of years later came in the main from the Lancastrian usurpation. But it is true that that usurpation strengthened the mass of that widespread, wealthy class which stands below the very wealthiest. It is true that if there had been no Lancastrian usurpation a firm tradition of strong monarchy based upon popular support might have become unassailable in England within a hundred years, and that the Lancastrian usurpation taking place when it did the chances of such a monarchy surviving to modern times were weakened.

The truckling to the House of Commons in particular, as the organ and symbol of the landed classes and wealthier burgesses, was the shame of the Lancastrians. They dared not be kings. Even Henry V, though he got three-quarters of his war revenue from the occupied territory abroad, continued to flatter Parliament, and poor Henry VI inherited a tradition too strong for a far more powerful man to have broken.

It is true that the county members were sent up by the greater magnates and that the Government also could have them chosen ; it is true that only a few men made themselves responsible for Knights of the Shire (eight to a score)—themselves mostly squires or the equivalent—and affixed their

seals as electors.[1] It is true that no one below a big farmer with some 120 acres of arable in his own freehold property, with no lord but the king, could enter these little committees. It is true that lawyers often got themselves named and sometimes, apparently, parsons. But the House of Commons remained essentially a body speaking for the lords of villages and the big burgesses of the towns, with their dread of taxation and their determination to keep the mass of the people under.

Though the Lancastrians had increased the power of that class, its peculiar strength at the end of the Middle Ages in England was not wholly their fault. It came in some measure from the accidental formation of the first informal gatherings of "Commons," local commissioners sent up rather irregularly and informally to court in the preceding century to find out how much they could pay.

On the continent, in the districts where parliaments and representation were invented (Aragon, Bearn, Foix, Toulouse, and later Brittany, Normandy, etc.), the squires had sat separately from the townsmen, and the king in States General asked for thorough information from *every class*: the poorest people could send in their grievances.

But in England, unfortunately for the interests of the masses, fortunately for that of the future aristocratic State which England became, the squires got mixed in with the townsmen and formed one body; there was not, as elsewhere, a separate "House of the Landed Gentry," so the landed gentry dominated as the spokesmen for all. The great bulk of mere working Englishmen were never consulted, a character in government which may be applauded

[1] There was no "election" in our sense, of course, save on exceptionally rare occasions of tumult, when perhaps, at the most, a hundredth of the population might gather. Knights of the Shire were named by the sheriff at the instance of big local men, or the king or government, and a small knot of substantial men gave in their names as backers. In the towns little bodies of wealthy men, or the mayor, named the burgesses.

or deplored, but is at any rate very clearly marked, and was never, even in the height of the stronger monarchy which succeeded the Lancastrian weakness, eliminated.

It remains in connection with this Lancastrian effect upon England, and the consequent state in which the country entered the last lifetime of the Middle Ages, to speak briefly of the relations with the Papacy. Long before the usurpation, the Pope's court being at Avignon and a French thing, and the English crown being at war with the French, the papal *political* power in England was weakened. The old feudal tribute arranged under John ceased to be paid, and we owe to that period the Statutes of Provisors and of Præmunire (as the latter came to be called, from the writ to which it gave rise). The first of these appears as early as 1351 ; the second, two years later, in 1353.

The Statute of Provisors laid it down that " Provision " might not be made by anyone outside the realm (which meant in practice the Papal Court at Avignon ; and " Provision " meant the earmarking of a particular benefice in England for the nominee of the Pope). The statutes which came to be called Præmunire, and of which the first dates from 1353, forbade the taking of a case cognisable by the king's courts to any foreign court—which again meant in practice the Papal Court at Avignon ; and also as we have seen on a former page in connection with the final statute under Richard II laid down as penalties for so doing, outlawry and the forfeiture of fortune.

The modern reader is usually puzzled by both these policies, and still more by their expression in formal laws. All through the Middle Ages, and right down to the quarrel between Henry Tudor and the Pope, Provision was exercised, usually with gross and increasing abuse. We have already seen in the last volume a sharp contest between the great and holy Bishop of Lincoln, Grossetête, and one of the strongest (as he was also one of the best) of Popes, about an appointment of this kind. But the thing had got worse, as

most of these abuses did get worse, with the "Babylonian Captivity" of the Papacy at Avignon. The Papacy at Avignon was a Capetian thing, it was attached in men's minds with the King of Paris. Also, it was more worldly than the older and grander papal court had been in the days of its magnificent independence, in the great days of the XIIIth century.

All these things combined made the Plantagenet monarchy desire to have a weapon to hand in case they needed it, to prevent undue encroachment. But we completely misunderstand the nature of such legislation if we imagine it to mean that from the day the law was passed onwards the Pope could not exercise his power of Provision, or must not expect to exercise it; or even that its exercise in England was technically illegal. Of course, by all our modern terminology it would seem that a statute proscribing in set terms a certain practice, at once makes that practice illegal. But the Middle Ages did not think of ecclesiastical statutes in that light. They thought of them as extreme or reserve powers, to be brought into play if certain *admitted* institutions went beyond their normal functions. Every one took the Papacy for granted. Everybody further took for granted the extension and development of the papal power as the political moderator of Western Europe. But the lay governments, the great monarchies, were necessarily watchful of exaggeration in that power, and its too great encroachments over what was regarded as the broad customary margin between the fields of regal and papal authority.

To understand the position, a distant parallel may be drawn with certain of our modern rules on public life. For instance, there hangs over the politician the threat of possible punishment, or, at the mildest, exclusion from public life, if he takes too large a bribe too openly and too scandalously, or if he is mixed up in too disreputable and publicly exposed a financial swindle. But that does not mean that either public opinion or the judiciary or the executive narrowly

watch the conduct of politicians and forbid the least trespass in this respect ; there is a very wide customary margin indeed.

Perhaps a more exact parallel would be the powers of a judge and jury in what is called " libel." On the one hand, everybody admits the right of public criticism ; on the other hand, when it is thought dangerous to certain powerful interests, let alone to the State, criticism too candid for the occasion is punished by fine and imprisonment. Or, again, in the matter of contempt of court, a judge has powers that are arbitrary. He can, for instance, commit to prison a man hammering in the neighbourhood of the court so that it interferes with his hearing of a case, if that man refuses to stop hammering. It is easy to see how such a power may be abused ; one must use common sense in its exercise. It was the same with the Statute of Provisors. It says in so many words that no benefice must be retained by the Pope, or rather by any power outside the king's dominions ; but that does not mean that the vacancies could not be sometimes so filled, or even that their being so filled was regarded as exceptional. The king himself would ask occasionally for a benefice to be so filled.

It is exactly the same with Præmunire. Præmunire in set words forbids under very heavy penalties, extending to exile and confiscation of all property, what was in practice appeal to the Papal Curia. But appeal to the Curia was as much a commonplace of that day as starting a mining company is to-day. If to-day we had a law forbidding the floating of any mining company, it would mean that an overt act of this nature would be punished. But Præmunire did not mean that *any* appeal to the Curia would be punished. It only meant, " I, the king, can, if I choose, check an abuse in this matter, and I have here a weapon ready to hand with that object." In point of fact, when Præmunire was exercised it nearly always carried with it, in the opinion of the time, a character of abuse. Men thought it more natural

that the regular appeals should be lodged in ecclesiastical cases before the highest ecclesiastical court in Europe, than that a local power should interfere with so rooted a procedure.

If we bear this character of the anti-clerical legislation in mind, we shall not regard the time as inconsistent or trouble ourselves with that apparent contradiction about which too much has been written in our text-books.

The Lancastrian monarchy inherited Provisors and Præmunire from their wiser predecessors. Their rise to power proceeds exactly with the great schism: for that begins coincidently with Richard II's accession, amid John of Gaunt's plots in 1377, and is only set formally at rest when Nicholas V is sole Pope after 1449. They picked no special quarrels either with the great Councils of their day, or with the conflicting candidate or the later (after 1417) more united Papal See. They helped the Emperor Sigismund in his efforts to heal the schism, and Henry V is largely responsible for the election of Martin as an anti-French measure. But their alliance with the great prelates in England from Arundel to their own kinsman Beaufort was a domestic alliance. They neither weakened nor accentuated the Catholicism of England, and the country enters the last lifetime of the Middle Ages as fully and quietly a part of united Christendom as any other, and one far less troubled by the passions of the great schism which had pierced so deeply in Germany and France.

IV

The End of the Middle Ages

(From the Fall of Cherbourg to the Opening of the English Reformation with the Episode of Anne Boleyn)

1450-1525—75 Years

IV

(A) The Restoration of the Right Line : The Wars of the Roses

(August 12th, 1450, to August 22nd, 1485—35 Years)

(1) *Plan and Summary of the Wars of the Roses*

IT is one of the misfortunes of English history that an era which, in the general story of Europe, is one of the first magnitude—the Renaissance, the second great awakening of the European mind, the opening of the modern world, should be a misery of civil war.

At the opening of what has been called " The Agony of the Plantagenets," everything good and evil in the general movements of our Western civilisation was making for vast and creative change even while the loss of Normandy was proceeding. It was the age of the first great voyages, of the new enquiry, of the opening of men's eyes to the noble proportions of antiquity ; of catastrophes such as the fall of the Eastern empire, catastrophes which were also to be creative in their way.

At the inception of these wars, at the moment when the Duke of York was first arming, the Turk was at the gates of Constantinople. The city was to fall in three years. At their close the Portuguese voyagers had begun the opening of the oceans, and three years after Bosworth had changed the whole character of commerce by doubling the Cape of Good Hope. Those years, which are filled in English history with the petty record of battle and murder confined to one realm, are for general Christendom the years of the great

Renaissance Popes beginning with the noble, industrious, and learned Alphonso Borgia, and continuing in Pius II and Paul II, and the unhappily worldly Sextus IV, who lived to the eve of the Tudors; that splendid court of the Vatican which suffered from its own greatness, and, corrupted by its very glory, provoked the upheaval of the next century.

This accident of a prolonged English tumult—itself ultimately the fruit of the Lancastrian usurpation—warped the story of England. At a time when all Europe was stirring towards a new birth, the intellectual vigour of this island was retarded. The minds of Englishmen are not at rest in a secure political setting. So far from a realisation of national unity and greatness—which was the mood of the time in France; so far from the realisation of an old racial intention—which was the mood of the time in the urban culture of the Netherlands, England is divided. She is at first suffering from a disappointed soul, full of memories of defeat abroad, made more bitter by the brief success on which they followed; next losing vision through a loss of loyalty to kingship so insecure; at last losing the national line itself and ceasing to be Plantagenet. As a consequence, the effects of the new life in Europe came slowly and too late to England. The new pictorial art missed England altogether. Letters diminish. No permanent verse is written, little record: and when the tide flows in at last the breach with tradition has been accomplished. The high poetry and noble rhythmic prose of 1580-1620, comes on a people already divorced from its ancient religion and estranged. Letters, which are the making of a people, accentuate for modern Englishmen the loss of their Catholic past.

Therefore, although it is true that the prolonged civil wars before the Tudors did not check the material life of the people; though merchandise increased and the comfort of life in towns; though there was much and excellent building; and though in time (though tardily) the implements of the new Europe—such as printing—reached the England of the

later xvth century, yet the dynastic struggle and the confusion of authority therein remain the chief features of the time.

The civil war in which the House of Plantagenet wore itself out and went down must be the principal matter for the reader of English history between the mid-century and 1455. Not only does it seize the eye of history, but must also be grasped as the main agent of the generation by any national student, because, apart from its vivid effect upon the mind of contemporaries, it determined the fate of the country.

Importance of the Wars of the Roses.

Had England, in this generation of thirty-five years between the Duke of York's appearance, armed before London in 1450, and the fall of the last crowned Plantagenet at Bosworth in 1485, been a secure realm under a great king; had authority increased instead of waned; had there been no necessity for the usurpation and novelty of the Tudor family, the religious revolution of the next century could never have been accomplished. Even as it was, that religious revolution was only accomplished at great effort, very hardly, unnaturally, and against the grain of the English.

Let me, therefore, at the outset of this section lay before the reader a plan of the Wars of the Roses.[1] Two elements have to be considered: (1) The claims of the rival Houses of York and Lancaster; (2) the military movements, that is, the scheme of the campaigns.

The Claims

The rival claims.

As to the first point, the Rival Claims: The principle at work, though confused in the multitude of its details, is simple in its essence. The House of York was the legitimate line, whether we judge legitimacy by the general rule of English succession—as it still stands, by precedent, or by

[1] The origin of the term "Roses" is obscure. All we know, certainly, is that in the heat of the struggle the badge of a Red Rose for Lancaster, a white for York, was common.

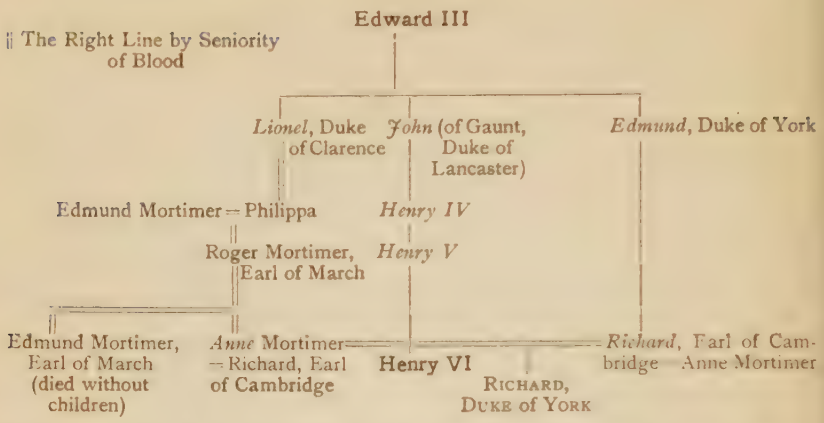
THE WARS OF THE ROSES

the broad opinion of contemporaries. Only one principle, and that a principle foreign to all general European, and especially English, tradition, and never attempted in practice by English authorities or English opinion—the French trick of the Salic law, invented in the past century to save King Philip—could make Henry VI legitimate King of England.

The claim of Lancaster in 1450 not of legal or moral right.

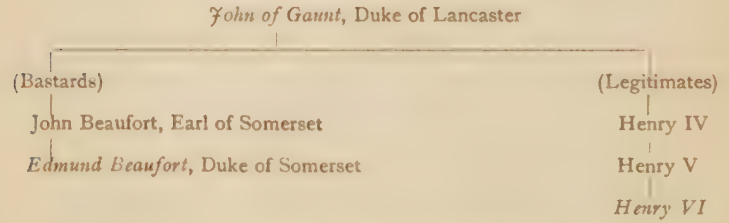
As against the Earl of March, the House of Lancaster, as we have seen, could at least reply upon the general principle that England would have a Plantagenet and not a Mortimer for king. That was not a legal principle, but it had after fifty years' actual tenure of the throne a certain political force. As against the House of York, however, the Lancastrian had *now* no such claim. For Richard, Duke of York, was Plantagenet. Richard, Duke of York, now a man in his fortieth year, had been from birth the legitimate heir-presumptive to the English throne, and his mother had been from birth the *legitimate* Queen of England. So far as legitimacy is concerned, the Duke of York's direct male descent in male line from Edward III, his quality of a true Plantagenet, was of no effect. But the moral effect was enormous. The popular mind had suffered confusion. It was impressed by Richard's name of Plantagenet; but the original Duke of York, from whom he came, was the younger, not the elder, brother of John of Gaunt. The claim of York *as York* against Henry VI as Lancaster had nothing to stand on. But Richard Duke of York's mother Anne had been legitimate Queen of England after *her* brother, the Earl of March, had died in 1425; and this brother had been legitimate King of England because he was the son of Philippa, herself the daughter of Lionel (Clarence), the *elder* brother of John of Gaunt, the elder son of Edward III. That was the position. I repeat, the elements of it are simple, and I will ask my readers to allow me to reproduce the table here once more in order to make it as clear as possible :—

York the legitimate line.



The Beauforts.

We have to bear in mind the whole time a third line which has no claim whatsoever, and yet ultimately gave such Lancastrian tincture as it could boast to the Tudor family. That third line is the Beauforts. We have seen how they were John of Gaunt's bastards by his mistress Katharine Swynford, and how they had been made legitimate for the purposes of inheritance and the rest. Indeed, John of Gaunt had married their mother (after they were all born), and had thus put them right with the Canon law; but there was no question of their legal claim to the Crown of England, and to make the matter doubly sure such claim had been specifically disallowed by Public Act. Their head at this time was the Duke of Somerset.



Here, again, there was some political weight in the complete absence of legal or moral right. The Beauforts had been treated by all three Lancastrian kings as part of the

family. One of them, Cardinal Beaufort, had been the principal figure in the kingdom during the whole Lancastrian usurpation: born in 1377 (ten years younger than his half-brother, Henry IV), a bishop (of Ely) at twenty, Chancellor more than once, deflecting a papal crusading army to help his country before Compiègne, chief agent in the burning of Joan of Arc, architect of the ultimate peace with France, not dying till the very eve of the Wars of the Roses (April, 1447), he is the one continuous personality of the three Henries. Moreover, Henry VI had made special favour for the Beauforts. At this very moment, 1450, he was giving the head of the family, the Duke of Somerset, chief power in the realm, and though the thing was not overt, some men whispered, and many more believed, that Somerset would, in the absence of an heir to the king, ultimately claim the throne.

So stood the case in 1450. Henry king, in fact, with a false title, but a title half a century rooted: Richard king in right (but neither saying so, nor, perhaps, thinking so as yet) but openly heir at least to Henry, and himself Plantagenet.

Other factors in favour of and against York and Lancaster.

Having that principle clearly in mind, that the Duke of York was the legitimate King of England in 1450, and the reasons for it, we must next appreciate the factors in the situation, other than strict right, which were also of much weight. They may be summarised thus:—

In favour of York:—

1. A strong capable man, the centre of a minority of the very wealthy families, but a well-organised and closely-knit minority, bound together, as we shall see, by the all-important Neville connection.

2. The corresponding weakness and occasional imbecility of that holy and most unfortunate man, King Henry VI.

3. The association in the popular mind of the Queen, Margaret of Anjou, with the loss of France, and of Somerset (the head of the Beaufort family) with the same loss, and the widespread unpopularity of all that set which clustered

round the king. In the popular eyes, Somerset was the man who had lost France, and at the same time Somerset was the figure-head of the king's clique. Margaret was the woman whose marriage to the king had cost the cession of Anjou and Maine—the keys to Normandy.

4. On the whole, better generalship at the outbreak of the wars, and the really remarkable military talent of Edward, Richard Duke of York's son (later Edward IV), in the first and second regular campaigns.

In favour of Henry :—

1. The usurping Lancastrian dynasty had now been established for over fifty years.

2. There still clung to it, not only the recent shame of defeat, but the old glories of Agincourt and the Anglo-French throne.

3. Henry was the crowned and anointed king. Only the very old men of that time—I mean at the outbreak of the civil wars in 1450—could remember any other crowned and anointed kings save his father and his grandfather. Now, crowning and anointing had great sacramental effect during the Middle Ages, and, indeed, until much later. We note that Richard, even when he was in a very strong position, hesitated to claim the crown, and such claim only came quite late from him.

4. On the whole, the superior fighting strength numerically was on the king's side. He held nominally the regular organisation for levying men from the counties: now a decaying system. More important, he had a majority of the lay peerage, that is, of the half a hundred wealthy men and leaders of English forces who had armed tenantry to follow them, and who could also raise much larger numbers by hire or by livery, that is, from local gentry.

5. The vigour, capacity, and untiring tenacity of the Queen, Margaret of Anjou, who perpetually brings up reinforcements to her side, even in the most desperate crises.

(2) *The Military Elements of the Wars of the Roses*

Now, as to the understanding of the Wars of the Roses in their military character.

Military character of the Wars of the Roses.

This, again, presents a simple scheme if it be seen in the right perspective. The Wars of the Roses are not a confused jumble of skirmishes, pitched battles, incidental victories and defeats. They are three quite distinct campaigns, each short (the longest only eighteen months), each successive one shorter than its predecessor (the last one lasts only a fortnight), and each separated from the one before and the one after by a long interval in which there is no fighting worthy of the name. (We must, of course, eliminate the private feuds which the disputed authority of the time naturally fostered: such as the little boxing match indulged in by Devon and Bonville round Exeter. They had nothing to do with the main dynastic conflicts.)

The preliminaries of the wars, the arming and counter-arming (marked by a short rough-and-tumble in the main street of St. Albans which ought not to be dignified by the name of a battle), stand separate from the three campaigns I have tabulated. These may be given the names of the Campaign of Towton (1461), the Campaign of Barnet and Tewkesbury ten years later (1471), the Campaign of Bosworth fourteen years later still (1485).

Before approaching the details of the period, I will print here a summary of these military movements, so that the reader may have them clearly before him.

The Preliminaries: Skirmishes

In September, 1450, York marches towards London for the first time: armed. No fighting follows.

Military summary of the Wars of the Roses.

The same thing happens in 1452. In 1453 the king has a son born, which changes the whole position, and, further, the king falls into imbecility, so that York, no longer heir-presumptive, is none the less Protector. In 1454 the king

recovers, and York loses the protectorate. Both parties think conflict inevitable, and begin to arm seriously. In 1455 a little body, not much more than a guard, surrounding the king and his court, with Somerset and the rest, is easily blown to pieces by the formidable Yorkist forces at *St. Albans*, where Somerset is killed and the king's person captured by York. This is what has been too pompously called the "First Battle" of St. Albans. It makes York and his set masters. His power has political ups and downs until 1458, when a new military quarrel is set and large forces are ready to engage in 1459.

So much for the preliminaries. There follow the three regular campaigns, each ending in its characteristic victory.

A. The Campaign of Towton

Eighteen months—September, 1459, to March, 1461.

Yorkist forces, marching West to concentrate with York himself beyond the Severn, push aside a Royalist body at *Blore Heath* (September 23rd, 1459), and effect their junction with York at *Ludlow* (October 15th); but the large army of the king easily disperses them. The principal Yorkist leaders fly oversea. They land again in the early days of June, 1560, occupy London, and fight, on July 10th, at *Northampton*, the first true battle of the wars, defeating the Royalist army and capturing the king. But the queen raises forces in the North, and in a skirmish at *Wakefield*, York and one of his sons are killed (December 30th, 1460), while the other son, young Edward, elbowing aside his pursuers at *Mortimer's Cross*, marches from the West on London, from which the king and queen have to fly in spite of a success in the second battle of *St. Albans* on February 18th. Young Edward enters London and is proclaimed king. His cousin, Warwick, marches out to meet the great forces which the queen has levied in the North. Fifty thousand men on Edward of York's side meet the slightly larger force of the king and queen at Towton, near York, March 29th, 1461.

They utterly destroy the king's army, but fail to capture the king himself, who takes refuge in Scotland.

The result of Towton is that Edward IV is now crowned and anointed and acts as undisputed king.

Ten years pass.

B. The Campaign of Barnet and Tewkesbury

Six weeks—from March 25th to May 4th, 1471.

After a reign of ten years, Edward (who, through imprudences of his own, had been compelled to fly), lands in the Humber on the 24th or 25th March, 1471. Large forces join him as he marches on London, which he enters, capturing the king, whom Warwick had by this time joined. Edward marches out from London to meet Warwick's army. They clash at BARNET on the 14th of April, Warwick is killed, Edward completely victorious. But the queen has raised another large army elsewhere, and Edward marches west to meet it. They clash at TEWKESBURY on May 4th. It is an overwhelming victory for Edward, and the young heir to Henry is murdered. Edward (who has murdered Henry VI) remains undisputed king until 1483, when he dies.

There follow the very brief reigns of his son, Edward V, and of his brother, Richard III, which leads one to the high summer of 1485 : a total of fourteen years between the B and C campaigns.

C. The Campaign of Bosworth

A fortnight—August 7th to August 22nd, 1485.

Henry Tudor, grandson of Owen Tudor (or Tidr or Tyddr), lands at Milford Haven with a few thousand Frenchmen on the 7th August, 1485. Richard I concentrates a much larger army against him at Leicester. Sundry levies of the west join Henry, and the two forces clash at BOSWORTH, where Henry Tudor, by the treason of Stanley, totally defeats Richard III, who is killed.

End of summary.

Detail of the Wars of the Roses

Richard of York arrives from Ireland and marches, armed, on London, September, 1450.

It was in the midst of a popular ferment, the whole nation indignant against the loss of France, the rebellion of Jack Cade only just put down, and the news of the surrender of Cherbourg just reaching the more distant parts of the country, when York came back from Ireland and marched towards London with a considerable armed force during September, 1450.

He had left Ireland without leave ; he was virtually in rebellion, though he was not openly making war. There was no fighting ; he was received by the king and promised that he should be allowed into the Council—his exclusion from which was a widespread, popular, as well as his own private, grievance.

Modern terms so perpetually intrude into mediæval records, and intrude with false meanings, that it is essential here to define. The Council meant very much more, indeed, than the peers—fifty or so—occasionally meeting the king in Parliament. It meant infinitely more than the nominated squires of the Commons. Even with a vigorous and active king, the Council helped to govern (for no man can administrate alone). With such a king as Henry VI it was supreme, ruling the separate actions of State and policy as a whole. The exclusion of Richard, nearest Plantagenet and heir to the throne, was a violent and even desperate affront : almost equivalent to calling Somerset the heir. There followed a Parliament in which the York interests had managed to nominate the Commons. Not a very important point, for the Commons counted little, but a symptom : for burgesses and knights of the Commons, nominated by little committees under the sheriffs and town authorities,[1] were nearly always of the party actually in power. His rival was, of course,

[1] To understand how utterly different the word "election" as used to-day was from the *electio* of the Middle Ages and later Tudor monarchy, we have the case of Yorkshire. Those who "elect"—that is, nominate—the knights are agents of *six* rich families. No one else is concerned.

Somerset, the head of the Beauforts, and the man whom all the populace regarded as the loser of France. The strength of York's position in this first moment of potential conflict is that—quite apart from his legitimate claim through his mother—he is heir-presumptive to the throne as senior male Plantagenet (through his father) after Henry. But this place was not yet admitted officially by Henry and his court and Council. The position was forced by one of his partisans in his own nominated Commons,[1] who was put up to ask that York's title as heir-presumptive should be officially recognised and proclaimed. That was in November, 1450.

The king's or court party, that is, the queen and Somerset, had the bulk of the peerage (and their armed retainers, of whom London was full) at their back. They avoided the difficulty, refused to reply, dissolved the Parliament, and saw to it that Young should be imprisoned.

The Court refuses to call him heir-presumptive.

Now at this point we must note the constitutional position: it is important. If the Duke of York were *not* heir-presumptive (which legitimately he certainly was, even if one admitted the Lancastrian dynasty), who *was* heir-presumptive? The only reply must be the monstrous one, "The Beaufort, Somerset." Not that the queen dared mention Somerset, or the king either, but their silence and refusal to declare York pointed to Somerset quite clearly.

Monstrous idea that Somerset should be declared heir.

Somerset, the most unpopular man in England, the man labelled with the national disaster abroad—and, incidentally, with the taxation it meant—representative of an illegitimate branch of Lancaster, and, moreover, a branch specially debarred from succession, stood as the possible king upon the death of a man of weak health and weak mind, who had been married for some years and who yet had had no child.

[1] He was a certain Young, one of the two burgesses summoned from Bristol. It is to be noted that the Duke of York's power to get this body called "the Commons" nominated at his will was so great that the Speaker—an official who in that day was spokesman of the Commons before king and peers—was his own servant.

Moreover, it seemed now almost certain that he would never have a child. His family, as a whole, had been singularly barren. We have remarked the poverty of blood in the Lancastrian usurpers; and now that so many years had passed since Henry VI, a mild young man of twenty-three at the time, had wedded the strong, tall, and vigorous Margaret, it was (prematurely) taken for granted that a direct heir would not be born, and Somerset, the Beaufort, was clearly aiming at the succession. In such a pass the Duke of York's clan—following a good soldier, the rightful heir—made up their minds that fighting was inevitable.

The great Neville connection.

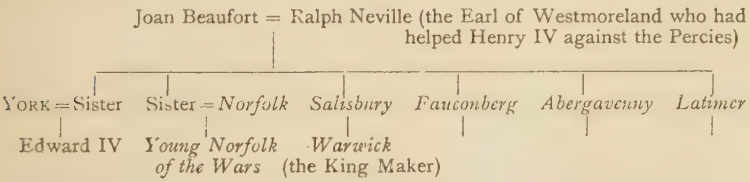
What was that clan? I have said that the core of it was the Nevilles, and we must now understand what that family meant at the time. It half governed, it drew revenue from, it could use as a recruiting field a great fraction of England. It was not much more than a tenth of the peerage, but it commanded more than a fourth of military resources.

The commander of William the Conqueror's fleet, when he came over to win at Hastings, was a certain de Neville (Neuve-ville, now Neuville, a large village or small town of Normandy in the Caen district). From him, in direct descent, came various magnates of the intervening four centuries, and, at last, one Ralph Neville.

Ralph Neville was born three years before Henry IV, in 1364. He died at sixty-one in 1425. In the interval, he did two things: (*a*) He supported the usurper, Henry IV, against his cousins, the Percies, thereby saving the North for the Lancastrian usurper, Henry IV, whose bastard half-sister, Joan Beaufort, he had married two years before the usurpation; (*b*) he bred twenty-three legitimate children by only two wives. The second and more industrious, the Beaufort wife, gave him fourteen; of these, six combined to make the "clan" of which I speak.

All their marriages are remarkable. One of the daughters had married Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, the representative of the royal blood of Thomas of Brotherton, Edward I's son,

the first duke. The son of this Mowbray-married daughter of William Neville's was Duke of Norfolk—duke as representing royal blood—when the Wars of the Roses broke out. The other daughter was a very remarkable woman, Cicely Neville, of hearty and even violent character, and *she was the wife of Richard Duke of York.* Of the four brothers, all were peers by their father's influence or through marrying heiresses to peerages. Richard had married the heiress of the House of Salisbury, and had thus become Earl of Salisbury, and he had a son, young Richard, now (1450) just of age, who had married the heiress of the House of Warwick, and was thus Earl of Warwick. He was about to show great genius as a soldier, and is known in modern history as "Warwick the King Maker." [1] The younger brothers of Richard, Earl of Salisbury, were Earl of Fauconberg, of Abergavenny, and Baron Latimer. So here you have a closely organised clique, most of them very wealthy, and all of them either brothers, brothers-in-law, or nephews of Richard Duke of York. And it illustrates the time to remember that they who were using their power against the head of the Beauforts owed their greatness to a Beaufort mother.



The six Nevilles, brothers and sisters (children of Joan Beaufort), their connection with Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, and the *seven* armed forces and revenues they command as Territorial Lords: (1) York; (2) Norfolk; (3) Salisbury; (4) Warwick; (5) Fauconberg; (6) Abergavenny; (7) Latimer.

It must be remembered that though real feudalism was dead, an earldom was still often a real thing in 1450. It meant that you had the revenue and recruitment of a large

[1] The connection with the old French campaigns is interesting. That Salisbury, who was killed before Orleans, just before Joan of Arc's attack in 1429, left an heiress, who married Ralph Neville's son. It is *her* son who is "Warwick the King Maker's" brother.

district. These Nevilles, therefore, had large armed followings of their tenantry, and their wealth enabled them, through a system which was now universally known as livery and maintenance (by which the greater nobles got the small local gentry in their district to be attached to them as fighting men—it was not a feudal bond, but a financial one) each to put a quite considerable army of his own into the field.

The Neville group determine to fight for Richard of York, 1452.

It was in 1452, after a year of bickering, that the determination was taken by this Neville group to put the thing to the issue of arms between Henry VI and their uncle and brother-in-law, York ; that is, to compel the king or, rather, the queen to dismiss Somerset.

Richard of York marched on London as he had marched two years before, coming, as he had come two years before, from the west. He skirted the capital to the south in order to get more recruitment from Kent ; allowed a force, which the court had gathered, to come out and stand between him and London, consented to a parley, dismissed his troops, and was, if Henry had not been the saintly man he was, in peril of death, for he had fallen entirely into the hands of the king. But for Henry, we may fairly believe that at this moment Somerset would have had York killed.

But in spite of this accident the potential fighting power of the Yorkist—that is, the legitimist—party remained intact. The reason that nothing happened for many months was the heavy national anxiety about the last few strongholds still in Plantagenet hands on French soil. It will be remembered that those castles and walls of the Garonne valley, with the great town of Bordeaux itself, which were now really attached to the Plantagenet connection (though in the past so often rebellious), were at this date being reduced by the French king almost as rapidly as Normandy had been. I have already written how that magnificent old soldier, Talbot, was sent out with a grievously insufficient force to see what could be done. In late 1452 he gathered his host

of Gascons, with its small English nucleus. It was in 1453, the summer, that he had marched to relieve Castillon, which the French were upon the point of taking, and in the trenches before that fortress ended his glorious life. Loss of Gascony, 1451-53.

There followed the loss of all that land; Bordeaux surrendered after a desperate siege on October 19th, and at last even Bayonne fell; nothing remained of what had been Plantagenet land ever since Eleanor, the heiress of all Southern France, had left her despised husband for the young Henry of Anjou, 300 years before.

Such news made an atmosphere in England heavy with slaughters and the chance of civil war, and even as that news came pouring in, loss after loss, things were happening in England which precipitated the domestic fighting. Effect on England.

On August 10th, 1453, the king had fallen into a complete imbecility; unable to notice men or things, and not moving. But something more was to happen. Just before the fall of Bordeaux, on October 13th, the queen had borne a son and heir—young Henry—to the Lancastrian line. The whole face of things was changed. The legitimacy of the child was furiously disputed—but quite unjustly. York wisely recognised the baby as Prince of Wales, which he undoubtedly was, but took over the regency of the next year, and was declared by the Lords "Protector and Defender of the Realm" (Parliament had met in February, 1454, and York had obtained this official decision before the end of March). Henry VI's imbecility (August 10th); his heir born (October 15th), 1453. Regency of York.

During all 1454 York was securing his party. He put his nephew, young Warwick (twenty-six years old), into Calais as Governor, dismissing Somerset; and Warwick showed himself most capable there. But at Christmas the king recovered. Therefore York's rule came to an end. In the May of 1455 the queen arranged a private council to which York was not asked, nor any of the Neville clan, and from which summons went out that a Great Council was to be held at Leicester with the specific object of protecting the The king's recovery (Christmas, 1454) puts the Queen in power, 1455.

king against his enemies. This meant that the queen, angered at York's regency, was determined to use the king for York's destruction. Therefore the Yorkist body put itself under arms; Norfolk was to act from East Anglia; York and Salisbury, who had consulted together, were to come down from the north. Somerset and the court, with as yet nothing more than an armed retinue, and such Lancastrian lords as happened to be at court (all the armed men together probably not more than 3000 gentry and plain soldiers) came out from London as far as St. Albans. In that town the little body was caught by the Yorkist army, contemptuously broken up, Somerset killed, and the king captured.

Skirmish called First "Battle" of St. Albans, May 22, 1455, and its effect.

It was an insignificant affair as an engagement: the killed were not much over a hundred, probably less, and the "action" was over in an hour. It was no more than an attempt to force a few barricaded streets. But it is to be marked for the following points: (1) Young Warwick, Salisbury's son, the later kingmaker, the eighth of the Neville clan, twenty-seven years of age, was the one who saw the opportunity of turning the barricades by the south; (2) York strongly professed loyalty; (3) as yet there was no violent hatred, no massacre of prisoners. York ruled, though discreetly and without the title of protector.

Shortly after Henry's malady was again announced, York again regent—but there was still a strong feeling for the known and reigning dynasty, and York could not yet declare himself. The king—if, indeed, he had been suffering—recovered. He deposed York from the regency. He obtained an oath of loyalty.

Three years of a false truce passed. In March, 1458, a solemn ceremony of reconciliation was played in St. Paul's with the chief enemies in apparent friendship: the queen with York and the opposing lords arm-in-arm. Henry tried to make all this real by impartial or mixed appointments. In particular, he made Warwick commander of Calais. But

such good intentions in one ailing and quiet man led to nothing. And it must be remembered that these years were full of disaster. The French burnt Fowey and sacked Sandwich, still a considerable place.

The winter of 1458-59 was spent in conspiracy by the Nevilles with York against the court, in preparation for war on a great scale by Margaret and the Lancastrian lords. The preliminaries are ended. We approach the full civil war.

Margaret of Anjou, the queen, played her part very finely. She tried (we may be pretty sure of it, though the point is disputed) to have her little child recognised as king —for Henry to resign That would have meant her own powerful administration of affairs. In that effort she failed. But she is the general of what followed.

Opening of the campaign of Towton.

The summer of 1459 passed without incident, but in September old Salisbury marched west to join York in the Welsh Marches near Ludlow, and thither Warwick also came over from Calais. On September 12th Salisbury was at Newcastle-under-Lyme. On the 23rd, at Blore Heath, in Staffordshire, he beat off an attempt at intervention. The junction was effected; Salisbury had slipped westward beyond the queen's army at Nottingham, and the Yorkists lay for battle behind the floods at Ludiford, below Ludlow town.

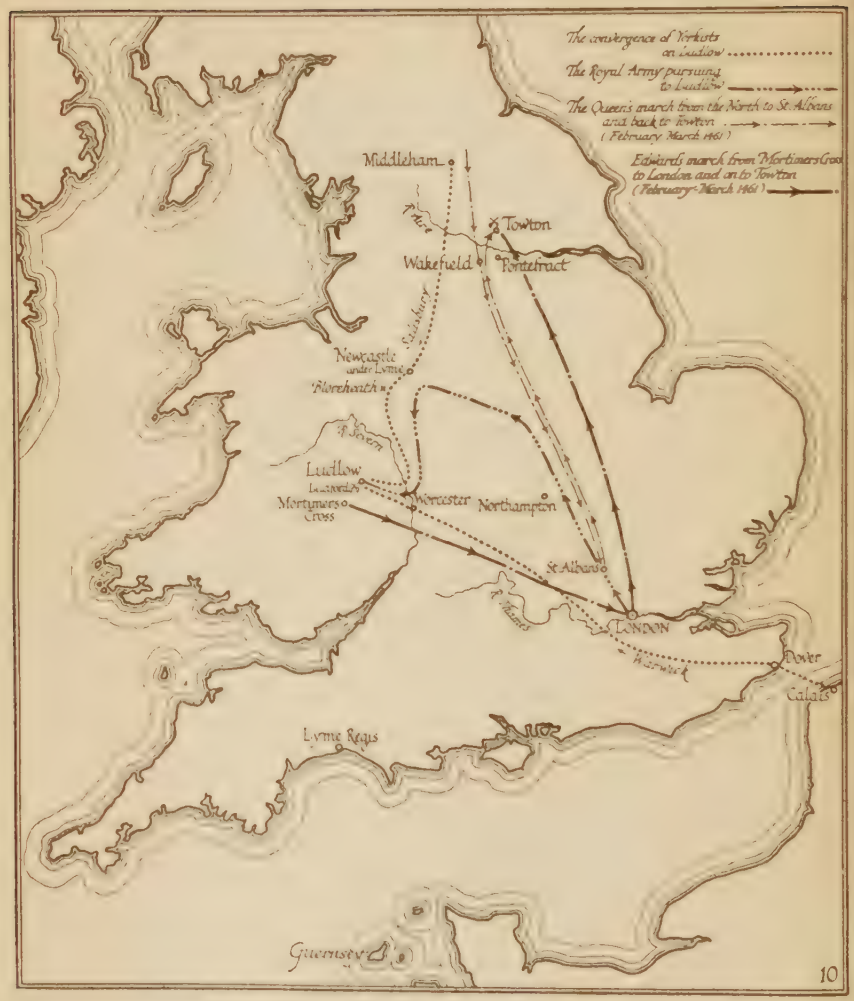
Skirmish of Blore Heath, September 23rd, 1459.

Rout of Ludlow or Ludiford.

The queen's party and her royal government had brought up a very large force, concentrated at Worcester, 60,000 men—far superior to York's and the Nevilles. Moreover, a body on York's side deserted. The inferior force could not stand, and after a cannonade over the flooded meadows of Ludiford rather than a battle, came a rout and dispersal—for the moment—of all the Yorkist forces.

Flight of Warwick and York's heir, young Edward, October 13th, 1459.

After the rout of Ludlow a tiny group of less than ten men, including young Warwick, his old father Salisbury and his cousin, the boy of seventeen, Edward, heir to the Duke of York (styled Earl of March)—already handsome, tall, very brave and, what is rarer, intelligent for war—rode secretly



LUDLOW AND THE CAMPAIGN OF TOWTON

in great peril to the south coast of Wales. The Duke of York himself had fled to Ireland. What this little group did on the South Wales[1] (or Devon) coast is extraordinary. One of them luckily had what we should call to-day a few hundreds of ready cash upon him. With this fund they bought a fishing smack, and young Warwick himself steered her over to Guernsey. They lay weather-bound in Guernsey for a few days, and then ran up Channel and reached Calais on November 3rd.

This bit of sailing makes very good reading in the words of a man to whom, it seems, the story was told by the actors themselves. " Le Comte de Warewic emmena son père et le Comte de la Marche au pays de galles ou le Comte de Warewic acheta un vaisseau faisant maniere qu'il voulait aller a Bristo. Mais quand ils furent montés sur l'eau Monseigneur de Warewic demanda au Maistre Maronier et aux aultres s'ils savaient le chemin vers le west, a quoy ils repondirent que non. Alors le Comte de Warewic voyant son pere et tous les autres ainsi effrayès leur dit por le recomforter que, au plaisir de Dieu et de Monsieur St George il les menerait bien au port, et de fait se mit le pourpoint et se tira vers le timon. . . . Dieu leur donna grace de parvenir a Calais mais anchois qu'ils y parvinsent eurent de moult fort temps."

That is, in English : " The Earl of Warwick led his father and the Earl of March to Wales, where he bought a vessel, pretending to go to Bristol. But once they got to sea my lord of Warwick asked the Master Mariner and others if they knew the course *westward ;* they said, ' No.' Then the Earl of Warwick, seeing his father and all the others afraid, told them to comfort them, that if it pleased God and my lord St. George, he himself would fairly get them to haven,

[1] So Waurin. Others say Devon. But if it were from South Devon they sailed this time, could they go *west*, or pretend they were for Bristol ? On the other hand, we have specific mention of the Dynham house and of Exeter. Did they start from the Welsh coast, go round the land, and touch at Exmouth ?

and at that put on his coat and went to the tiller. . . . God gave them grace to reach Calais, but only after very heavy weather."

If that astonishing cruise had not been taken the Wars of the Roses would not have been fought. As it was, the political genius of Warwick and the military genius of the young Earl of March—neither as yet suspected—were saved, and the very important point, Calais itself, was held against the reigning king.

Somerset—the son of the man killed at St. Albans—had been appointed back to the command of Calais. He tried to re-take it, but was quite unable. On the contrary, Warwick raided the Kent coast and captured the hostile transports (January, 1460). Warwick held on all winter, and during Lent took another long but less perilous cruise with larger convoy to Ireland, there to consult with the Duke of York in Dublin upon what their next action should be; for Richard, Duke of York, after the break up of his forces at Ludlow, had gone straight to Dublin. He had been received there with enthusiasm, held his own against native attacks which Margaret had stirred against him, and stood in an increasingly strong position to cross over and renew the war when opportunity should offer.

Some plan was arranged at Dublin between York and Warwick (whatever it was, it did not come off properly, as we shall see). Warwick was back in Calais by the 1st June, the Whitsunday of that year 1460, and acted immediately.

Warwick prepares to invade: summer, 1460.

He first of all sent a comparatively small detachment over the Straits and seized Sandwich and held it. Then on June 26th he landed with 2000 men and the young Earl of March. There is one important point to be noticed about this expedition. Warwick had with him a papal legate specially sent by Pope Pius II to try and arrange peace.

The authority of the Papacy was not, since the great schism, so strong as it had been, but the presence of the legate in the Yorkist body is very important, none the less, and has not

been sufficiently emphasised. The best way of putting it would be, I think, to say that it made men regard the Yorkist attempt, not as an armed rebellion or any effort at a change of dynasty, but as a rightful plea for the recognition of a very great Plantagenet who had been ousted from the Council and treated as a public enemy by the queen and her set. The Archbishop of Canterbury joined the advancing Yorkist forces. There was a very large recruitment from Kent. London was summoned on the 30th of June, and received them on the 20th July in great pomp and with strong popular support. Then Warwick and tall young Edward, the Earl of March, leaving Salisbury behind to keep up a strict blockade of the Tower, which was held by a Royalist garrison, marched up north towards Northampton, where the king stood with his standard and a large force.

Battle of Northampton, July 10th, 1460.

King Henry's army was put under an old, respected man, the Duke of Buckingham. It was drawn up just in front of Northampton Town, very much on the line which the railway takes now across the Water Meadows, strongly entrenched, and a ditch in front of it, and either end of the line reposing upon the bank. It had a large number of guns, and had there been a true engagement the field would have given a very interesting example of the new power of artillery. But what followed was not a true engagement nor a thing chiefly military; it was a thing chiefly political. Warwick made every effort to have a parley with the king and to settle matters without fighting. For some reason of which we are not certain, but which was probably nothing more than the exasperated state of men's minds, and a memory of the rebellion of the year before, and also because private executions had taken place in the interval (each party treating the other as traitors), Buckingham refused to allow any parley. He would not allow the Bishop of Salisbury, who was Warwick's spokesman, to see the king at all. He would not receive the Papal Legate. That morning of July 10th, 1460, before the battle of Northampton, may be regarded

as the decisive moment after which nothing but exhausting civil war could follow.

I have said that the so-called battle of Northampton was not a true battle at all. It was at once decided by the treachery of the Royalist right wing, commanded by Lord Grey de Ruthyn. They received the Yorkist left and young Edward, Earl of March, York's son, into their end of the entrenchment, actually helping them across the ditch. That, of course, turned the Lancastrian line and crumpled it up. The whole thing was over in half an hour. Very few were killed—less than 300—and of these some did not fall in battle but in flight; drowned as they tried to cross the river. The essential is that those who were killed were the great nobles and that, by deliberate policy, they were cut down *after* the facile success—or, at any rate, after it would have been quite easy to have spared them. The king himself was captured; but the queen and her boy of seven, young Edward, the Lancastrian heir, escaped.

Richard, Duke of York, who ought to have come up to join the Yorkists in this battle, was too late. He did not land in Lancashire from Ireland till the early autumn, in September, but clearly Warwick and young Edward had both judged that their forces were sufficient to succeed; also, they had marched rapidly and so prevented a full concentration of the Lancastrian forces.

Warwick and young Edward, Richard's son, took the captured king straight up to London from Northampton. They entered on July 16th and got the Tower on the 19th; appointed their own people to the chief posts of administration, and summoned a Parliament for the following October. All this in King Henry's name and as though ruling for him.

Richard, Duke of York, lands from Ireland, September 2nd, 1460,

Everything was in Warwick's hands until York landed, and Warwick judged quite rightly that though opinion, on the whole, sympathised (especially in the South and in London) with the Duke of York, yet there was no popular

support for a change of dynasty : the Lancastrians had been in the saddle too long for the memories of the Usurpation, now more than sixty years old, to survive with any vividness. Therefore, when the Duke of York landed in Lancashire on the 2nd of September, his supporters in the capital grew nervous. He approached London by slow stages, administering justice on the way as though he were king. He even took on something like regal state, and by the time he reached Abingdon was flying the Royal Banner. They could not dissuade him. On October 9th he publicly announced his legitimate title to the crown of England.

and declares his title to the Crown, October 9th, 1460.

Parliament had just met, Henry was not present at the moment, and the throne was empty. York put his hand upon that throne, proclaimed his title to it, and appointed the approaching All Saints' Day, November 1st, as the date of his coronation. His party managed to moderate his policy. There was negotiation carried on for a fortnight, and before the end of October a compromise. Henry was to remain king during his life, York to succeed him—the king's boy was to be passed over—and York was to be given the principality of Wales.

Poor Henry ratified this deprivation of his own son on the last day of the month, October 31st, and, of course, the queen, free to act in the North, had nothing to say to it. She gathered a very large force, made an alliance with the Scots, and her action led to a strange blunder on the part of Richard. He seems to have thought that no concentration had yet taken place, and that, by a rapid march north with a comparatively small body, he could prevent the northern lords from mobilising their tenantry. He must have had both bad and tardy information. He took Warwick's father, Salisbury, with him, and his own second son (called the Earl of Rutland), his elder son, Edward Earl of March, being sent off to prevent the action of the Lancastrians in Wales.

Richard reached safely his own castle of Sandal, close to Wakefield, where he kept Christmas—apparently ignorant

of the advanced stage which the Lancastrians' northern concentration had reached. A very large body of that force suddenly surrounded him. The details are confused, and we know little of the action, but we know the Duke of York himself was killed in front of the castle on the 30th December, 1460, with nearly all his men. Then begins that awful tale of murders, the mark of the Wars of the Roses; things were done which were never forgiven. They bred reprisals until the English chivalry of the Middle Ages went out in blood. Young Rutland, a lad of seventeen, was murdered by Lord Clifford, to whom he had surrendered; old Salisbury was beheaded in Pontefract, close at hand; and to make the gulf between the two parties deeper yet, the head of the Duke of York and the head of young Rutland were cut off and put above the gates of York. A crown of gold paper was set on each, to mock their claim. The war was becoming a violent vendetta of reciprocal murder.

Death of York near Wakefield, December 30th, 1460.

The great northern Lancastrian host came on confusedly South. It contained elements which the southern and midland Englishmen hated and regarded as half savage, and certainly it behaved disgracefully, plundering wherever it passed along during the line of march, as though in a conquered country. When it had got as far as St. Albans by the middle of February, it effected a complete surprise against the body which Warwick had drawn up there covering London. King Henry was with Warwick at the time and fell into the hands of the queen's army. Warwick, with the wreck of his inferior forces, again fell back on London. He went off to the West. On that day, February 17th, 1461, after this sharp, not bloody, action (a mere breakdown on the one side against very large forces on the other, known as the second battle of St. Albans), there was no military obstacle whatever to prevent the Lancastrian Government, now with the king once more at its head, occupying London.

Second Battle of St. Albans, February 17th, 1461.

Here, again, we have one of those numerous episodes of the period which are very difficult for the modern man to

understand. We have to guess at motives, and it seems in this case that the hesitation to occupy London was really due to the simple and holy king's dread of a sack and pillage. But to that we must add the fact that the military leaders and the queen herself seem to have thought the situation too secure to need enforcement by marching into the city. It was a great error. London was asked to capitulate instead of being simply occupied. That gave time, therefore, for long negotiations, and it is fairly certain that the greater merchants, at any rate (who, like the populace, were strongly Yorkist), knew all that was happening in the West, and what chance of relief they had. Moreover, London was now far more partisan than it had been, both because opinion was inflamed by the murders (there had been one or two bad ones at St. Albans), and because the Lancastrian army, with its northerners and its indiscipline, including the abominable sack of St. Albans itself, had got a very bad name.

What had happened in the West was this. A fortnight before the queen's great northern host had wiped out Warwick's forces at St. Albans, young Edward of March (now since his father's death Duke of York, and legitimate heir of England) had begun to show his great military talent. It will be remembered that he had been sent West to watch, contend, or, if possible, defeat, the forces which the queen had put into Wales under Owen Tudor: that man who had been the paramour of Henry V's widow, Catherine, years before. He was now perhaps fifty years of age, perhaps rather more. Young Edward caught him; and, at Mortimer's Cross, on February 2nd, 1461, an action took place the details of which we have lost. The place is close to Wigmore, in the marches. Edward's victory was complete. Owen's son, young Jasper Tudor, got away; but Owen Tudor himself was murdered by the victor, with sundry others of the leaders.

Battle of Mortimer's Cross, February 2nd, 1461.

Mortimer's Cross thus fought on Candlemas [1] Day, left the

[1] And a mad woman adorned Owen Tudor's bleeding head with candles, where it stood set on the Market Cross of Hereford.

young Duke of York free to march on London ; too late to come up in time for St. Albans, but able to join Warwick, who was coming West to meet him, as we have seen. We have no proof but inference that the two cousins and principal military leaders of their time were in touch with the merchants of London, but it looks as though they had information of the feeling in the great town.

On the 27th February, in the afternoon, they came marching in from the West. Their force was small, but thought sufficient to hold the town—half a dozen thousand men. All the old scruples about upsetting the dynasty were by this time drowned in the blood of the reciprocal murders. The young Duke of York knew the ignominy done to his father and his brother, and the heads with sham crowns of derision set up on the gates of York. Warwick could only remember that *his* father had been murdered at Pontefract. Moreover, we must remember that as King Henry was not in the hands of the Yorkists, they could not act on his nominal authority. They must have some other royal authority on which to act.

I have said that it was on Saturday, February 27th, that the two cousins, the boy Edward of nineteen and his cousin Warwick, the man of just over thirty, had marched into London. On the very next day, the Sunday, Warwick's brother, the Bishop of Exeter, made a speech to the army and the townsmen outside the walls, calling for the recognition of the Duke of York as Edward IV. The populace were all for it. Four days later the Yorkist leaders begged Edward to accept act of fealty, and on the morrow, the 4th March, he sat enthroned and crowned at Westminster and received homage.

Young Edward of York acknowledged King of England as Edward IV, March 4th, 1461.

To count and date reigns in this time of confusion is futile enough. But it is, at any rate, from this day, March 4th, 1461, that the reign of Edward IV officially runs. His documents are dated from it, and it was counted by his governments, the earlier and more precarious, the later and more solid ones, as the entry of his reign.

It was a very solemn sight, Edward holding in his hand that most ancient and awful symbol, the sceptre of the Confessor, whose shrine was just at hand, and wearing the old crown also on his young and handsome head.

He had already shown his talent as a general. He was to prove it gloriously in the days immediately before him.

All this while the Lancastrian army outside the gates of London was dispersing. The northerners were angry at being cheated of the sack of London. The leaders were angry at the hesitation of the king. What was left of them the queen and Somerset led northward, presumably for recruitment. Edward, now acknowledged king in London, and his cousin Warwick, gathered every man they could from the Home Counties and from the Duke of Norfolk's country in the East, and acted so efficiently that in less than a week they had a large force gathered. Warwick marched out with the first batch of it on Saturday, March 7th; the bulk of it four days later on the Wednesday, the 11th. It was evidently a disciplined force, marching well, for it got into contact with the army of the King Henry and his queen on the line of the Aire, just east of Pontefract, on the 26th, in bitter weather, after a march of some 200 miles, which most of them had covered inside fifteen full days. That is, nearly as good marching as Napoleon's from the Channel to the Danube. The Aire was forced probably on the Saturday, the 28th of March. On the morrow they engaged. The position taken up by the Lancastrian army was about six miles north of the river, just beyond the little village of Saxton, on the rising ground called Towton Heath. There can be no doubt that the issue was determined by the different military values of the personnel on either side; the smaller Yorkist army in good discipline, the Lancastrian in bad. The forces ultimately engaged were very large, perhaps 50,000 on Edward's side and 60,000 on Henry's.[1]

[1] As contemporaries give us these numbers, modern scepticism at once says, "Perhaps so many as 15,000 or 20,000 may have been present." It is very tiresome.

Edward's decisive victory of Towton, Palm Sunday, March 29th, 1461.

It was Palm Sunday, March 29th, 1461, "and all the while it snowed." The blizzard drove into the face of the Lancastrians. Edward was so confident of his forces that he attacked before his whole line had deployed, and part of his command broke; but the day was decided by the Duke of Norfolk coming up on the right flank with a fresh body. We do not know the details, but it looks as though the left flank of the Lancastrian line was turned by this advent of Norfolk. They followed up far on into the wintry night, forcing the huge flying host of Margaret's men down the steep bank into the brook to the west, and massacring what fell by the way. Somerset escaped, as did the king and queen, but there was heavy slaughter of the main forces, and the usual batch of murders following on the victory—only much worse than any there had yet been. Every prisoner of high birth was killed in cold blood to the number, it would seem, of nearly fifty. The first military episode of the civil wars, the Campaign of Towton, was over.

On the next day Edward marched into York, whereas Henry and his queen were flying to Scotland. He cleared everything right up to the border (the Scotch would not meet him), left Warwick in charge, went back to London, and was crowned with great ceremony and splendour on the 28th of June.

There could, of course, be no question of a "Parliamentary title." Talk of that kind is an anachronism too common among the historians of the last generation. Usurpers tried for a Parliamentary title—or, indeed, for any title—but the Englishmen of the XVth century thought of the king as holding his awful position by right and of blood, not at the will of chance magnates called lords, still less by acquiescence of squires and burgesses sent up to order under the name of Commons. What the Parliament of the day was used for was to make record and settlement of a new situation: not to create it. It met before the end of the year (November 4th, 1461), the Commons, of course, nominated

by the victorious party, as they always were nominated, by authority of whoever really governed till the break-down of monarchy in the beginning of the XVIIth century. A general act of attainder confiscating lands wholesale was drawn up, corresponding to one which had been drawn up by the Lancastrians two years before. The usurpation of the Lancastrian dynasty was solemnly denounced; the legitimate line appeared finally secure, the more so from the strength of will apparent in the fine young man who now sat upon the throne of England: Edward IV.

There follow three years in which, with Warwick as the real executive head, Edward's new reign is confirmed. They are the three years prior to the king's private and (at first) disastrous marriage. Meanwhile, that gallant woman, Queen Margaret, had not given up the struggle. She got French help. She attempted a general northern insurrection. There was some fighting in which the situation was easily saved by Warwick, but though the case seemed hopeless (there was no fortified place remaining in the hands of her party except Harlech, on the extreme edge of Wales) she again managed to raise the extreme North, and Warwick, again coming up there in July, 1463, all but captured her and her boy. They went off to the continent for refuge, and after she had gone her partisans were put down. Their last effort was in the year 1464. Warwick came north for the third time in the early spring in March, put down a rising in Cheshire, went up to arrange permanent peace with the Scots, and on May 15th the last action, if action it can be called, of that campaign was fought at Hexham. Warwick's brother, Montagu, came upon the last Lancastrian group under Somerset's leadership about three miles from Hexham—which place gives its name to the slaughter. The Yorkist regular force was so much larger than its opponent that Somerset's command would not stand. The gentry were too proud to move; and when the remaining body—some 500—was surrendered and captured, it was mainly composed of the lesser

Slaughter of Hexham, May 15th, 1464.

and the greater landed men of the little army. There followed an even worse series of murders than had distinguished the greater actions. Somerset was beheaded that same day, and the rest in batches, one after the other, in various places. Bamborough, which still held out, was stormed by artillery on July 10th, and Grey, who commanded it, duly murdered, after a form of trial, within a week.

So we are here in the height of the summer of 1464, with Edward IV completely saved by force of his own genius in arms and the tireless energy of his cousin Warwick and all the Neville clan—but he had already ruined his position by an act of misjudgment which his military talent could not supply. In the spring of that same year, 1464, this soldier of twenty-two had secretly married Elizabeth Woodville.

There have been two such episodes in English history when the governing man surrendered to the foresight and tenacity of a woman. The first of these women, Elizabeth Woodville, ruined the Plantagenets; the second, Anne Boleyn, ruined the unity of Christendom.

. . . . . .

The Woodville marriage, May, 1464.

Elizabeth Woodville was the widow of Sir John Grey and the daughter of Richard Woodville: a gentleman, but not one of the greater gentry. Her mother, however, was that very important person, Jacquetta, whose marriage with Bedford had completed the ruin of the Plantagenet position in France. It was not, therefore (as is too often written), the fact of the king's sudden marriage being socially unworthy of him which did the main harm. It was the secrecy and, as it were, the irresponsibility of it; still more the way in which it challenged the power of the great Neville group with the Earl of Warwick at its head.

Warwick was doing the hard work of the new king. He was an unwearied diplomatist. He had a fairly general view of that complicated time of new discovery and of ruin, of crystallising nations and failing feudalities wherein the Middle

Ages were quickly dying and the new Europe was as quickly coming to birth.

He kept his eyes on continental Europe, with which all his class were still bound up (in spite of their new English speech) and which had been their working place as soldiers and administrators for a generation.

Therefore had he woven careful schemes with proposed royal marriages—a French marriage finally—at the end of them. These schemes were now maturing. I think he had loyally woven them with the object of rendering strong and secure his cousin's tenure of the throne.

Just when the fruit of so much activity and thought should have been gathered, months after his indiscretion, that cousin confessed to it. He admitted that he had already married a subject, married a subject from the Lancastrian side of the lesser gentry, and that the marriage had been secret and kept secret. That was the cause of Edward's new peril.

It had happened in a fit of desire, haphazard. He had met the fine young widow (her husband had gone down at St. Albans), fell in love, been caught. She had refused him save on the condition of marriage, and had held to that refusal. He had succumbed ; and on a May-day morning, at Grafton, they had been secretly married : only Jacquetta (the mother) and two of her servants had been there to witness.

The thing was not without its good side. It introduced health. At last, two properly matched in youth and beauty had come together. Edward, when this secret marriage took place, was exactly twenty-two, and as tall and handsome a young man as one could wish to see. Elizabeth (I am afraid) may have been five years older, but young enough, and a daughter to the best-looking man of his time. It was a fair wedding of a Spring morning. But, as I have said, it ruined the Plantagenets. It introduced an insufficiency of blood, the contempt of the " Sang réal ; " the secrecy of the wedding forbade full support from the nobles ; what was worse, it made possible the rumour of bastardy in the children,

which rumour, seized by Richard III later on, was the basis of his power.

and its effects.

The effect was not immediate, and might never have been as strong as it was but for the greed of the Woodvilles, and the weakness of Edward in yielding to his wife. His five sisters-in-law married into the greatest fortunes of the Yorkist, that is, the legitimist group. Her father was made Constable and then Treasurer. One of her brothers was given the Scales heiress in marriage. Another, at the age of twenty, was allowed to marry the fortune at least of the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, at the absurd age of nearly eighty. The whole thing gave an effect of distortion and injustice : a grotesque riot of favouritism.

We must remember that the Crown could often compel by legal right, could always procure, such alliances. It had wards ; it could promise places and give manors as a bait. It disposed of the public wealth. Every heiress thus given in marriage, every ward or rich man marrying into the Woodvilles by taking one of the daughters, meant a heavy loss of prospective income to the people who had made Edward king, and thought they had a right to the spoils of victory. And the quarrel was embittered by the fact that these people, who thought they had a right to the spoils, were, in the main, the old nobility, while this Woodville clan was new. It was also Lancastrian.

Within four years of the king's marriage aristocratic rebellions were breaking out all over England, almost certainly Neville in inspiration, and mixed up with a popular cry that Warwick was the man to save England from an impending chaos. Warwick was perhaps already thinking of going over to the Lancastrians.

In the course of one of these risings the new queen's father and brother were caught and put to death, and at the end of them Warwick was what the rebels had desired him to be, the master of the country. He even had the power to keep the king as his prisoner for a brief period in

1469, at Middleham, one of his castles. It was yet another blow to the prestige of the Plantagenet kingship. But Warwick had to let his prisoner go again in the face of a Lancastrian movement in the North, which, had it succeeded, would have destroyed him as much as Edward *at that moment:* for he had not yet formed a definite plan to reinstate the Lancastrians.

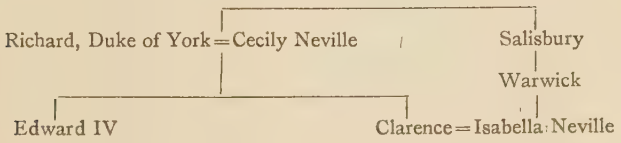
Edward, once free, continued to show the military talent which distinguished him. He put down yet another rebellion in 1470, and as by this time Warwick had at last declared definitely against him, he marched to destroy that foe.

The confusion of alliance and counter-alliance, betrayal and counter-betrayal, with which the next months are filled would be impossible to follow with any clearness in such few pages as these. The action we must follow, a tortuous action, but one which alone gives unity to those weeks, is the action of Edward IV's younger brother, Clarence. Clarence, at the head of an armed force, working with Warwick against his brother, King Edward, and, immediately after, with his brother, King Edward, against Warwick, is at once an example of the welter of the time, of its personal rather than party motives, of the spirit which destroyed the royal family, and of the way in which a small body of troops turned the balance one side or the other.

The truth is that in the Wars of the Roses the principle of succession had become so shaken that, after Edward's fatal marriage, the throne was for the grasping. Clarence himself, without a jot of title, might aim at it—calling Edward a bastard or getting him killed.

Clarence [1] had married Warwick's daughter. When

[1] Here are the relationships :—



Warwick turns definitely Lancastrian and goes off with Clarence to conspire against Edward IV in France (1470).

Edward, released, had raised his forces and was prepared to destroy Warwick, Warwick and Clarence fled together to France, there determined to restore the House of Lancaster; for there Warwick, whose leadership had helped to make Edward IV king, could meet and conspire with Margaret, Henry VI's queen. They arranged that Henry's own son, called the Prince of Wales, should marry Warwick's other daughter. Now Clarence all this while had hoped that, if in the quarrel Edward were deposed, *he* should be made king, or at least be Henry's heir; and it is this plan of Warwick's to make Henry king again which accounts for his later defection.

For the moment Edward oddly thought himself secure, though Margaret, Warwick, and Clarence had landed (September 13th, 1470) and already held London and found men flocking to them. He still trusted Warwick's brother, Montagu, with great commands in England, and nearly suffered a second capture from his illusions—for Montagu attempted to seize him near Doncaster, unarmed, and he only saved his person (and probably his life) by flight.

Upon that accident all armed support suddenly failed the young, handsome, uxorious soldier; but his good fortune did not fail him. He seized three ships at Lynn, crossed the North Sea successfully in spite of great peril, and while Warwick and Clarence and the queen were back in London taking poor old Henry VI out of the Tower, solemnly crowning him again, calling a Parliament in his name (on November 26th, 1470), and ordering their Commons to support their lords in annulling all the Acts of Edward's reign; while they were turning Edward's men out of their lucrative offices and filling these offices with their own, Edward, abroad, managed to get just sufficient help and no more from the Duke of Burgundy.

It was an odd piece of luck,[1] for the Duke's tradition was

[1] Due to the Duke's marriage with Edward IV's sister.

Lancastrian. The Duchy of Burgundy was a State quite as powerful as England : more powerful, with England's government all in chaos. He and his cousin and over-lord, Louis XI of France, were in the midst of a mighty struggle to decide whether France should in future be two States or one. To a man watching Europe as a whole, the quarrel of the Wars of the Roses in England is but an episode of this largely continental issue. It was the sequel to, but something quite different from, that Burgundian civil war which had given Henry V his brief triumphs a lifetime earlier. At *that* time the Duke of Burgundy was so close a relative to the French king that all the quarrel was within one State. *Now* two more generations had increased the distance. Moreover, the Duke of Burgundy had by marriage acquired large new lands, most of them not even under feudal vassalage to France. So, at this moment (1470), Charles le Téméraire, three years after his father's death and with seven more years to live, was head of that great Middle State, astraddle between France and the Rhineland, of which his ancestors had dreamed. Could he but add Lorraine it would be one compact realm. It was in trying to add Lorraine that he fell. All that episode of the rivalry between him and Louis XI is by far the chief thing in the story of Europe at the time, and English affairs are but an adjunct thereto.

Burgundy, then, consented to help Edward—secretly, and not too generously : apart from policy, there was strong personal animosity between him and Warwick. However, Edward did get that barely sufficient sum of money which procured him a force of some 2000 men. That was in early 1471.

What follows is a curiously exact repetition by the legitimate King of England of what the usurper, Henry of Lancaster, had done seventy-two years before ; what looked like a piece of foolhardiness on Edward's part was probably due to the fact that he knew his brother Clarence, disappointed of the throne, would betray Warwick and bring up forces to aid himself—so personal had all these quarrels become.

Edward lands at Ravenspur, March 14th, 1471.

On March 14th, 1471, Edward landed at Ravenspur, in the Humber, just as Henry of Lancaster had done nearly eighty years earlier. He declared, just as Henry of Lancaster had done, that he sought only his rights as a great noble, and not the throne. He marched right past Warwick's brother, Montagu, who may have been obscurely betraying his own Neville clan—we do not know—but who, at any rate, did not interfere with him. Clarence, sent out with an army by Warwick, had begged his warrior father-in-law, Warwick, to remain in the Midlands. Then, promptly betraying that father-in-law, he joined his brother Edward. Between them they marched on London to occupy that capital and seize the person of King Henry who lay there: Edward now claiming once more the title of king. He appeared before the walls of London on April 11th. He entered. He put Henry into the Tower, met his own wife Elizabeth Woodville, released from sanctuary, and saw with her the baby son whom she had borne to him during his exile. But meanwhile Warwick was marching on London. Two days later, April 14th, Edward went out by the north road to meet him. The two armies met at Barnet, within one long march of London.

Battle of Barnet, Easter Day, April 14th, 1471. Death of Warwick.

On Easter Sunday, April 14th, 1471, the decisive Battle of Barnet was fought, upon a misty day and in confusion. Its details are difficult or impossible to follow in the confusion and contradictory accounts of the time, though ingenious attempts to reconstruct the field have been made. The essential point of that action was that Warwick was killed, as was his brother, and that Edward's small army, probably less than 10,000 men, saw its opponents destroyed.

Campaign of Tewkesbury.

But the remaining Lancastrian forces had to be dealt with. On Easter Eve, the day before the Battle of Barnet, Henry VI's Queen had landed at Weymouth with her son, the Lancastrian heir, young Edward, now seventeen years old. Had she come earlier—as Warwick had urged—their combined forces might have overcome Edward's. Edward marched

THE CAMPAIGNS OF BARNET AND TEWKESBURY, 1471

from Barnet at full speed to secure the crossings of the Severn, for the queen's reliance was upon a junction with Jasper Tudor in Wales. On both sides there was some fine soldiership. Margaret, marching north, gathering forces as she went, reached Bath on the 29th of April. On that same day Edward, coming west, was at Cirencester. It was Margaret's business to cross the Severn and effect a junction with Jasper Tudor; Edward's to intercept her and bring her to battle before she could get beyond the river. Edward marched straight for Gloucester (which was held for him) to cut her army off there, but it had slipped past him. He turned north along the Cotswold, she just below him in the valley, nowhere finding a crossing. The last day and night of this race was May 2nd and 3rd, a Thursday, and Friday. Each accomplished—it seems incredible, but so we are told by contemporaries—a march of 40 miles well within the forty-eight hours—rather under thirty-six. Perhaps that was true only of mounted men catching up; but, at any rate, Edward so pressed forward that he caught up the queen's force, which had camped, exhausted, at Tewkesbury, and lay himself before it. She had camped her utterly exhausted men in the afternoon. He had come up at evening. Next day, Saturday, May 4th (after such marching!) the action opened in the fields south of Tewkesbury town, between the Abbey and Treddington.

Battle of Tewkesbury, May 4th, 1471.

Edward's high military talent, with a much smaller but probably better disciplined force acting against entrenchments, fully succeeded, as it had at Barnet. The queen fell into his hands, and the Lancastrian chiefs perished on the field or were murdered. Of all these murders, however, *one* was decisive: among those who were slain was the hope of the Lancastrian dynasty, Edward, the young Prince of Wales. There are various accounts of that death which do not tally, but most probably the deed was done in Edward's own presence. The Duke of Somerset, the last male Beaufort, was murdered also.

. . . . . .

Edward returned to London. And here (men thought) was the end of Lancaster. He reached the town on Tuesday, May 21st, 1471. On the morrow the body of King Henry was exposed in St. Paul's for men to be certain that he was dead—and so the revolution of those few weeks ended.

Edward, now completely triumphant, returns to London and has Henry VI murdered, May 21st and 22nd, 1471.

In this, the height of the summer of 1471, twelve years remained of secure rule for Edward IV. They were years of great importance in the social history of the English people. They were years also in which the mind of the continent settled into its Renaissance form, in which Spain was becoming united and the French monarchy an ordered centralised thing. But in the political history of England they have little place.

It seemed now as though the Wars of the Roses were over, and with them the chaotic interest of those days. The foolish and perpetually treasonable Clarence quarrelled over the Warwick inheritance, and with Edward's decision in the matter, and quarrelling further with Edward's prevention of his marriage to the heiress of Burgundy, quarrelling for a third time over a verdict given against one of his household, was put to death in 1478. While the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, was still alive, Edward had attempted, in connection with him, an attack on France, which failed mainly through Louis XI's skilful bribery (the failure was registered in the Treaty of Pecquigny, on the Somme, September 13th, 1475), and nothing of consequence remained.

Edward's efforts to marry his daughters in a series of great alliances with the son of the Scottish King, and of the King of Castille, and of Maximilian of Austria, and of the King of Denmark, all failed. One single mark of these years remains, the ceding of Berwick to the English Crown.

Outwardly it was a calm after storm. Inwardly it was the last, transformed, and dying gesture of mediæval

monarchy. Murder, intrigue, and moral chaos had completed their work. The end of the Plantagenets has, by the vivid pictures it makes, detained interest out of due proportion. It was but an end.

Excellence of Edward's rule. He reigns without the interference of Parliament.

One point about these last (and prosperous) years of Edward IV which must always stand out was his ability to free himself from the pressure of the landowning and merchant classes, and to reign as a true king standing for the whole body of the people against the mere power of wealth. From 1475 to just before his death—that is, for eight years—he summoned only one short Parliament (in 1478), and ruled as he should without stooping to share with rich men the full power of a popular leader. He was economical, strict with accounts, and intelligent in the use of foreign trade. He husbanded the regular revenue of the Crown, and made little necessity for supplementing it with special grants, which were always an opportunity for interference by the wealthy taxpayers. He came very near to subjecting these to an exact assessment, and it would have been well for the England of the next generation had he succeeded: but he could not create a precedent. He had revenue from France, that is, from Louis XI, after Pecquigny, as a price of his neutrality—a yearly equivalent of half what the Commons would have granted. He made wealth at home pay its quota, and he used his foreign policy to fill the treasury.

Thus Louis XI, in his plan for a unification of France and for the extinction of the feudal relics therein, was anxious to acquire Margaret of Anjou's nominally dependent provinces of Anjou, Lorraine, and Provence. But Margaret was Edward's prisoner, and it was in his power to hand her to France or keep her. He handed her over. Louis XI got his provinces, and Edward's treasury the price of the bargain. The Crown was secure in the customs, which were now part of its regular income, though voted as a matter of form at a king's accession. Henry V had them for life at the end of

1415, his son in 1453, and Edward himself in 1465, and with these had gone the subsidy on wool.

Why Edward's excellent precedent of eliminating, as far as possible, Parliamentary grants and so retaining the power of the Crown undiminished, was not maintained will be described in the next volume; at any rate, he merits the praise of having founded its possibility.

With all this success, intelligence, and deserved popularity among the mass of Englishmen, Edward IV had one grave weakness for a king: a weakness that has ruined reign after reign and brought his own—though without disaster—to an end too soon. He had no control of his body. He grew debauched, and it was this that brought the large, friendly, soldierly man to so early a death. He was within three weeks of forty-one. He died easily—a little anxious about his young boy, the heir.

Death of Edward IV, April 9th, 1483.

They buried him in Windsor, where his gilt coat of mail, with its jewels and its banner, hung for a hundred years and more than half a hundred. Then the Puritan soldiers stole it. He died on April 9th, 1483.

Edward had left two young sons, Edward and Richard, the eldest not thirteen years old, the youngest, eleven. He left also, most powerful through intelligence and through that disputed Woodville marriage, a younger brother Richard; a man of thirty-three years, bearing the title of Duke of Gloucester, and destined to figure in one of the strongest legends of English history. All things favoured Richard. The quarrel was fierce between himself and the party of the Woodvilles. It was this party which had the possession of the young king, Edward V. That is the simplest way of putting it, though the confusion of personal secret alliances and counter-alliances, betrayals and counter-betrayals was greater than ever. The moral force which helped Richard was the tradition that the surviving brother of the late king should be Protector of the realm during a minority. It was upon this that he worked.

Ambition of Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

Stafford, the Duke of Buckingham representing on the whole the older nobility,[1] supported Richard; and when Rivers and Grey, the queen's relatives, a brother and a son, were bringing the young king to London, he intercepted them with a small force, took them prisoners while they were actually in subservient conversation with him, got hold of the young king, and marched on London, while the queen took refuge in the sanctuary of Westminster.

Richard made protector.

But Richard did not yet seize the crown. He was declared protector. He promised that the coronation of his little nephew should take place on the day after midsummer, complained of a conspiracy against him, beheaded Hastings, the supposed head of it, without trial, and on the very eve of the day when the child should have been anointed and made perfect king, his partisans were ordered to move.

He had already summoned a popular meeting after establishing a terror through Hastings' death.

A cleric, the brother of the Mayor of London, one Shaw, was given the task of preaching to the crowd at Paul's Cross, and in that sermon was repeated the story that Edward IV himself was illegitimate, the claim that his marriage with Elizabeth Woodville was uncanonical through a previous engagement, and the assertion that Richard, the protector, alone was the true legitimate son of that former Richard, Duke of York, the claimant to the throne thirty-five years before at the origin of the Wars of the Roses.

By accident or design Richard passed as this statement was being made, the likeness to his father was pointed out, and the difference between him and his lately dead brother. It was hoped perhaps that a popular cry would be raised in favour of the duke, for there was certainly a current of opinion in his favour, but the mob did not move. Two days passed, at the end of which Buckingham again addressed the great

Movement in favour of Gloucester,

[1] He was the direct descendant of John of Gaunt's brother, Gloucester, on the father's side, through Gloucester's daughter. On his mother's, of the Beaufort bastard line.

popular gathering to the same end. There seemed then to be some marked support. Parliament, which was just meeting—or, at any rate, some of the lords and members of the Commons—joined with the crowd. Buckingham produced a petition that Richard should take the throne as his right and—the usurpation being patent—"Parliamentary Title," (the accompaniment of usurpation) was claimed; Richard approached and took his place upon the throne on June 26th, 1483, in Westminster Abbey, four days after the date on which he had promised to crown his own nephew in that same traditional place; on July 6th he himself was crowned as Richard III.

who is acclaimed Richard III, June 26th, 1483, and crowned July 6th.

We shall never know how far this was supported by the populace of London. It certainly was not supported by the general popular feeling of England: hence the very strong legend of Richard as a monster, upon which the Tudors lately successfully relied. There seems to have been general acquiescence in London, but, during a progress through England which followed, Richard felt the insecurity of the land beneath his feet. The South, in particular, he feared might rebel.

Insecurity of Richard.

The two young princes his nephews—the legitimate king of England, Edward Vth, and his younger brother Richard, —now called bastards, were imprisoned in the Tower. It was certainly the belief of contemporaries that they were killed, but how, when, or by whom we know not. What we do know is that it was to Richard's interest they should both die; that he put them out of sight; that they were not seen again. Unless, many years after, a man who could not properly account for the intervening time *may* have been one of these children. We also know that during some repairs in the Tower, nearly 200 years later, two skeletons corresponding in age to those of such boys were found under a staircase. Of direct evidence on their death we have none, save what was obviously arranged by Henry VII after the death and defeat of Richard.

He found that Buckingham, who had helped to make him, was betraying him; he had news that young Richmond, Henry, the son of Edmund Tudor (who had escaped to Brittany with his uncle Jasper after Tewkesbury), was to be set up against him. It is a proof of what a state the English kingship had got into by this time that such a proposal should be possible. This Henry Tudor was a young man of twenty-seven without a shadow of real claim, the son of a father almost certainly bastard, who, even if he were legitimate, had not a drop of Plantagenet blood, but was bred by a servant in the palace; of a mother in far greater position, a Beaufort, but bastard also in origin and, moreover, debarred from inheritance: himself with nothing kingly about him, no reputation in arms, a fugitive and insignificant, he seemed an impossible candidate to kingship. Yet candidate he was at a time when kingship had become a mere spoil. The weight of the matter lay not in this Henry Tudor, but in the many-rooted opposition to Richard and his usurpation.

But Richard was a very courageous man, of vigorous intelligence. He prepared to face the storm.

Against its first fury he was successful. Most of the South rose against Richard; Henry Tudor was proclaimed in Exeter, but the rising failed, and the young man, having but touched at Plymouth, fled back to Brittany again. A Parliament was summoned in the next year, January, 1484; there were great confiscations of land, a general oath of allegiance imposed, and at that moment we should mark a very important act which Richard thought politic, but which proved in the end his undoing. Lord Stanley, head of the great Stanley clan, had married the widowed mother of young Henry Tudor. Her property fell under the bill of attainder affecting the Lancastrians, but Richard gave it over to her husband, believing that he could thus buy his support. The effect was exactly opposite. It made Stanley consider Richard weakening, and it increased his estimate of Henry Tudor's chances, and thenceforward Richard's good

He tries to buy the support of the Stanleys.

fortune began to desert him. He proposed but failed to achieve a marriage with his niece Elizabeth—a marriage which would have destroyed the opposition of what had been the queen's party. His own son and heir died; and he had to declare the very doubtful title of his nephew, John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, and make him the new heir to the throne. Popular Lancastrian ballads and popular Lancastrian talk began to be heard. He needed money extremely, but feared the imposition of heavy taxation at that moment. He put pressure upon the rich to help him, and so lost in moral support what he gained in fiscal resources.

It was in such a situation that young Richmond, Henry Tudor, thought the moment had come to make a second bid for the throne.

Henry Tudor sails and invades, August, 1485.

He sailed from Harfleur on August 1st, 1485, with French money, and with an army of Frenchmen, about 4000 strong, and landed (August 7th, 1485) in Milford Haven, choosing this point because Wales was Lancastrian, and his own blood Welsh.

He put up as a second and equal standard, the Welsh Dragon of the Pendragonship. His forces, perhaps now doubled in number (but not more) by irregular Welsh contingents of doubtful military value, reached the Severn. Here Shrewsbury doubtfully received him, and its young earl brought in 500 men, but the force remained small. Against it Richard had gathered in the Midlands an army of more than twice the size. Moreover, Richard's army was English. In Henry's there was hardly a man who could speak the English tongue, except a handful of exiled nobles and the few who had come in at Shrewsbury.

But one decisive factor was uncertain. Stanley, with 5000 men at his command drawn from Cheshire and Lancashire, the step-father of young Richmond, was neither with the king, nor was he openly hostile: [1] he watched from

[1] Henry Tudor had plenty of secret promises of support; but in these wars such things were unreliable.

THE CAMPAIGN OF BOSWORTH

Lichfield. Richard seized his son and heir, Lord Strange, as a hostage, and concentrated at Leicester on August 20th : on that day Richmond had moved from Tamworth to Atherstone.

The unequal armies met at Bosworth on the 22nd of August. Stanley's brother had already joined the invader. Richard, rightly believing himself betrayed, ordered the Stanley heir, Lord Strange, to be put to death. In the very midst of the action the young man's guardians saved him, and the father, now free to act, joined Henry in his turn. It was this treason which determined the day. The last of the Plantagenets, the ill-formed, criminal, courageous king, not yet thirty-five years old, fought with a rare valor, charging desperately at last to find the skulking Tudor and kill him with his own hands. He fell, and some one, taking up the crown which had fallen from his helmet, put it upon Henry's head.

Battle of Bosworth, August 22nd, 1485, and end of the Plantagenets.

It was Friday, the 22nd of August, 1485, and the long Plantagenet story was ended.

Tradition has put into his lips a fine couplet :—

> Nay give me my battle-axe in my hand, set the Crown of England on my head so high,
> For by him that made both sea and land, King of England this day will I die.

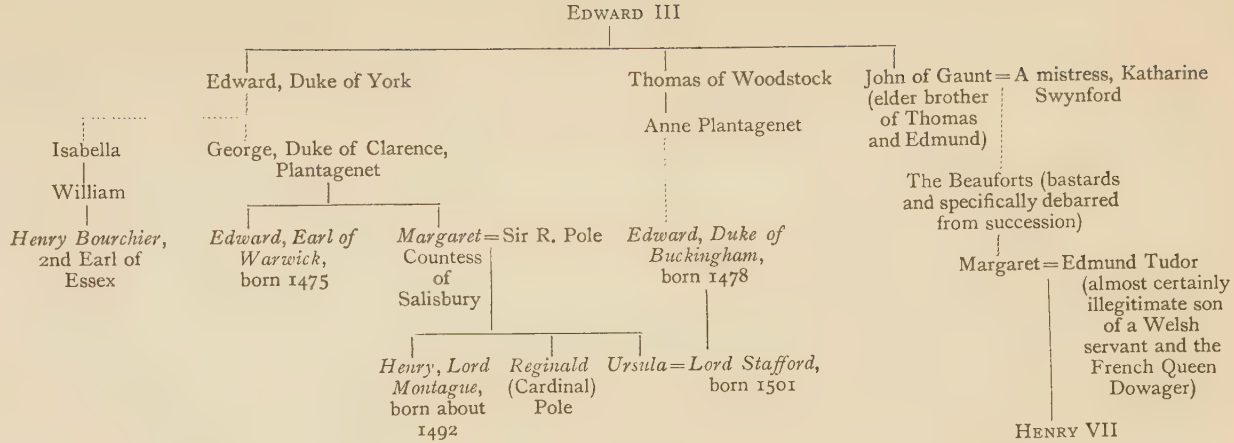
(B) The Tudor Foundation: Henry VII

(From August 22nd, 1485, to April 21st, 1509—23½ Years)

Character of the Tudor Usurpation.

The nullity of Henry VII's claim to the throne in any legal or customary sense, powerfully emphasises the condition into which the English monarchy had fallen through disputed succession. The prestige of regular filiation and primogeniture had become so shaken through the first Lancastrian usurpation (its temporary success in war, its later breakdown and shameful defeat abroad, its wrangling with the elder legitimate branch and the bewildering changes of the middle of the century) that it had come pretty well to this: anyone could be king, immediately accepted as king, and, in the long run, well affirmed as king, if there were a clique of important men to back him, and if he got organised executive power into his hands.

The Tudor usurpation was a far more monstrous thing than the Lancastrian, though in the breakdown of chivalry it was accepted. But it acted in a different fashion. The Lancastrian usurpation warped and deflected the development of England by permanently weakening the sanctity of the national dynasty, hence degrading as permanently the free and accepted kingship which had been the ideal of the Middle Ages. But the Tudor usurpation cut across all tradition: it was not a twist but a breach. The Plantagenet glory was not further degraded, it was clean supplanted: taken away, and a new thing put in its place. And the reason that so abrupt an action could succeed was the moral


EDWARD III
Edward, Duke of York
Thomas of Woodstock
John of Gaunt (elder brother of Thomas and Edmund)
A mistress, Katharine Swynford
Isabella
William
Henry Bourchier, 2nd Earl of Essex
George, Duke of Clarence, Plantagenet
Anne Plantagenet
The Beauforts (bastards and specifically debarred from succession)
Edward, Earl of Warwick, born 1475
Margaret Countess of Salisbury
Sir R. Pole
Edward, Duke of Buckingham, born 1478
Margaret
Edmund Tudor (almost certainly illegitimate son of a Welsh servant and the French Queen Dowager)
Henry, Lord Montague, born about 1492
Reginald (Cardinal) Pole
Ursula
Lord Stafford, born 1501
HENRY VII

All those in italic (and many others) had a legitimate claim, each in their order, to the Crown of England when Henry VII began to reign; Edward, Earl of Warwick, his sister, Margaret, and so on; Henry VII had none.

exhaustion of England in the matter of political right and wrong. The old conscience supporting true lordship was too jaded to react. It had suffered violence from nearly a century of disputed title to the crown.

There certainly survived a general national feeling for the Plantagenet name and blood, a general national worship of the "blood-royal"; but the object to which it should be attached had become blurred and confused. When, therefore, this man, Henry Tudor (or, rather, those who supported him), had won his decisive battle and held the machinery of government, he was bound to be accepted and accepted he was. But we must never forget that, to the mind of the time, the thing was strange and revolutionary, and that a "Tydr" should sit upon the throne which had never been occupied by any but the males of the Angevin line for more than 300 years was morally a revolution. The modern talk of "Parliamentary election," and the rest of it, is nonsense. No man could have thought, whatever legal language might be used, that the least significant part of the Parliamentary institution "The Commons" was more than a machine for the registration of title. The idea of the *Commons* electing a king, or even hesitating to accept him, is absurd. But even Parliament as a whole could not do so. No one, for instance, could conceive of Parliament refusing the Crown which had been won at Bosworth, if only for the simple reason that those who were summoned to its official meeting could, as to the nobility (who were nine-tenths of its laical weight), be summoned wholly at the discretion of the victor, and, as for the Commons, were nominated by the executive power. To imagine Parliament deciding the succession is to read into the XVth century the conditions and ideas of 200 years later, when kingship was dead. It would be like saying that the chapter of Canterbury to-day chose the archbishops because it had "Congé d'élire." It is quite possible that 200 years hence the chapter of Canterbury will choose and nominate the archbishop. But an historian of

that day, describing it as doing so in 1927 on the strength of the "Congé d'élire," would be singularly lacking in historical sense. No, Henry was king because he won Bosworth, or, rather, because his step-father, Stanley, won it for him by treason.

Here was a young man in his twenty-ninth year, the son of a man who had oddly appeared in the court in his boyhood, concealed there as a baby by the queen (who had borne him to a lover of servant rank): a young man having in him nothing of the blood-royal of England, for that father of his was only made legitimate artificially, by an order, and was in any case no more than the chance offspring of the unpopular French Queen Dowager, and a sort of clerk or groom whom she picked up in the palace. It is true that this father of Henry VII's, Edmund, who later became called the Earl of Richmond, was accepted by the court; but only because he had been the little half-brother and playmate of the slightly older and royal child, King Henry VI. There was here what is called the "one of us" feeling; but no trace of legitimate succession. It is true that this doubtful Edmund was married to the Beaufort great grand-daughter of John of Gaunt, and that she was Henry VII's mother; but she, again, was the great grand-daughter in an illegitimate line which had been specifically and emphatically excluded by law from any hope of succession.

Henry, then, was no more than the head of a faction, the Lancastrian faction, because there was no other young man left alive to head it; but he was of a thoroughly despised origin.

Chivalric character of English Middle Ages dies under Henry VII.

What we have to follow under the reign of this man is the very rapid dying out of the old chivalric traditions in England. The rapidity with which they died out was in no small measure due to the influence of the new king's character; though the process is aided, of course, by the circumstance of the time: the exhaustion of the old families; the final abandonment of feudalism, even in its last sparks of vitality;

and all the effects of the Renaissance into which the England of that time was proceeding at great speed.

On this account, the advent of the Tudors appears like a geological " fault " in the series of English history. There is a distinct step down in place of an incline. All over Western Europe, of course, the same thing was going on. The old nobility of mediæval origin was losing something of its territorial power, as it had long ago lost its feudal character. The kings were becoming more and more powerful, served by a more regular bureaucracy, and founding the modern system of exact government with national rather than personal revenues. But in England the process began more sharply and was more rapidly and thoroughly accomplished. Partly by reason that England was a highly individual unit : small compared with France or Aragon-Castille : defined in frontier exactly by the sea (save at the neck of Scottish border), nowhere (save at Calais) astraddle of another realm, and nowhere at all confused by overlapping frontier districts of double or changing allegiance ; partly, also, by reason of Henry Tudor's own character, despicable in the eyes of chivalric tradition and base on any standard, but thereby the better suited for intrigue and for maintaining continuity of rule by widespread spies abroad and at home, and by ceaseless vigilance in concealment of motive and action.

As for the man himself, we must understand him, because he was so largely responsible for what followed.

Henry VII's appearance and character:

He was rather taller than the average, with sparse hair and an expression anxious and cunning in repose, not without vivacity in conversation ; his eyes grey, his mouth suffering from some absence of teeth : to a more general consideration of him I will return at his death. Before he died he had come to impress contemporaries with a quality which that same corrupt but brilliant generation throughout Europe admired, and which they called " Wisdom." It was in part the old traditions of Lancastrian cunning. It was still more the application of lessons he had learned from his elder con-

temporary, Louis XI of France, and from his own avaricious soul, the lessons depending upon avarice : particularly the maxim that " money is power when chivalry is dead." He indulged, as had Edward IV, in private trading on his own account, but that is no mark of the man. He got a hundred ounces of gold into his treasury by extortion for half an ounce that he got in any other way, and we must remember that this accumulation of wealth was personal. He had no serious military expenditure. He had a full treasury on accession, and masses of confiscated lands. He never in the whole of his life showed real affection for any human being. Indeed, we may make quite sure that of such an emotion he was incapable. When his heir, upon whom so much depended, died in his later years, he did indeed, as a contemporary tells us, have some short passage of sympathy with his wife, but after her death he was incredible in his sacrifice of decency—as witness the enormity of his plan for a second marriage. Not even his nearness of blood, not even his own son or his own son's prospective wife but was sacrificed to his cunning. He demanded of life nothing whatsoever but personal advantage, as he conceived such advantage to be. It is possible that if one knew the details of the man's physical life one would find that he was one of those cut off from the best pleasures of the senses,[1] with a poor appreciation of scent, colour, form—and especially of wine : that supreme test. He was very industrious, very tenacious, but sly to the point of absurdity.

Great fiscal change under Henry VII.

We must next remark that the time was one of rapid fiscal change in England—not elsewhere. The fact is obscured by the far greater financial revolution which took place under his son, Henry VIII, as also because that great *second* revolution went to the very heart of society, being accompanied by a revolution in religion. Still, we shall never understand the evil of the Reformation in England

[1] He was said to be fond of music. His devotion to fine clothes I take to be political.

unless we appreciate what Henry VII did by way of confiscation, and disturbance in the security of property, half a lifetime earlier. In his very first Parliament he imposed a law whereby *all land alienated by any king since the origin of the Wars of the Roses should revert to the Crown.* Our own generation knows that such fearful disturbances are possible, and can visualise them, though our fathers would almost have denied them to be possible, and certainly could not visualise them.[1] But consider what this meant to families all over England : great masses of land suddenly seized from its present owners, and often land which had changed hands a dozen times. But Henry piled up his treasure not only by such wholesale schemes, but in every conceivable way. He would get grants from the Commons for a war which he did not prosecute. He would press private merchants for loans which were not repaid. He perpetually exacted fines. Increasingly as his reign goes on does he depend for power upon this growing heap of gold.

Margaret of Burgundy.

Over against Henry Tudor was Margaret, the Dowager Duchess of Burgundy, who kept her court at Malines. She was the sister of Edward IV, the centre of all those who rallied to the legitimate Plantagenet against this last and worst usurpation, nominally Lancastrian, really Welsh. She was a woman of forty years of age, energetic, never letting go her hold. She had the ability and strenuousness of the Nevilles through her mother, that able termagant Cicely. Her dark eyes under strong lovely arching brows, her full face, her small pursed mouth, are still before us. Yet the whole has something as a mask about it, a face less dominating by far than her action. Had she but had larger financial resources, she might have upset her adversary. She failed ;

[1] John Stuart Mill thought about 10 per cent the limit of taxation, after which an impost would defeat its own object and fail. It was further a dogma of that generation—and one which we all heard repeated till the Great War—that a nation which repudiated debt could never borrow again, save on ruinous terms, . . . and so on.

but she, and her tradition after her, maintained alive the last embers of loyalty to the legitimate line in England.

Warwick, the male heir, imprisoned by Henry.

There was living, when Henry seized the throne, one male claimant to that throne who, supposing the boy sons of Edward IV to have been murdered, was male heir of England, and, indeed, had been recognised as heir by the last Plantagenet, Richard III. This was Edward, Earl of Warwick. He was only a child just over ten years of age at this moment of Henry's accession.[1] He was Earl of Warwick because he was the son of the king-maker's daughter, but his father was that Clarence, the younger brother of Edward IV, who was in the right Plantagenet line. The child Edward, Earl of Warwick, was true Plantagenet; the eldest of the blood, and by general custom in Western Europe he might have been King of England. Henry imprisoned him as a matter of course; how he later murdered him we shall see.

The new king reached London by no very rapid marches. He entered the capital with some pomp in the first days of September (the 3rd). He took his leisure, and was amply able to do so with such large armed forces now in his hand. He had himself crowned on the 30th October. And here we have detailed occasion to weigh the value of modern talk of a "Parliamentary title." Henry VII's first Parliament, not summoned till September 15th, did not meet till after the coronation. All that it did was to confirm under orders what had already happened. What is still more striking, even that confirmation gave no title to the throne, nor even attempted one. The royal draft (for it was clearly of Henry's invention) kept to the vaguest terms; it attempted no definition of title, for the excellent reason that Henry had none, and that any attempt to define it upon his part would have given claims to a rival. All he could say was "I am king."

[1] Born at Warwick Castle, February 21st, 1475. He was dangerous to Henry as male heir. Strictly speaking Edward's daughters came before him.

Henry's affirmation of his crown without title.

Therefore the few lords (there were only eighteen laymen present in the governing assembly—thirty-six abbots and bishops), and the attending body of the Commons, could do no more than speak of "the inheritance remaining in the most royal person of our New Sovereign Lord, King Henry VII, and the heirs of his body," which was, of course, no title at all, but a mere servile repetition of the fact that he had seized the crown. In this same Parliament he caused tonnage and poundage to be given him for life: the usual practice, and one by this time invariable.

The point is so important to the understanding of later English history that we must delay upon it.

The royal Customs duties.

National revenue meant, until the mid-XVIIth century, the king's income. That income originally arose, as was seen in the last volume of this history, from the king's position as a great feudal lord *plus* his position as the political head of the nation. The first gave him annual payments from his manors, aids and death duties from his direct tenants, great and small, and wardship and dowry, and other lucrative feudal rights. The second gave him control of the minerals, the heaths, and mountains, and principal woods, and much arable land, all grouped under the heading "Forest," comprising about one-third of the area of the realm, and controlled by the king absolutely, being external to the feudal manorial system. It also gave him[1] payments from Jews whom he licensed as usurers, the emoluments of coining and of the courts of justice (in part, for part went to local governors), and occasional sales—irregular—of positions in his gift.

All this made up a fairly regular amount, on which the king was supposed to manage all regal functions, from the most public, such as the royal courts, to the most private, such as the clothes he wore. *There was no idea of taxation regularly proceeding from taxpayers.* That is wholly modern.

[1] Till the end of the XIIIth century. After that there were no licensed Jewish usurers in England.

But the king's income was less and less sufficient as the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth centuries proceeded. The feudal due shrank, many payments became conventional, fuller duties fell on Government. Therefore the regular revenue had to be supplemented in all sorts of ways : percentages on private wealth, forced loans, etc. ; but each of these ways was regarded as something of an abnormality or exception, even when they were practised so continuously as almost to become regular income. Being supplements and exceptions, they could not be claimed of right by the king. They had to be " granted " by Parliament, that is, by the wealthiest people of the kingdom with a " tail " of burgesses, lawyers, and squires, called " the Commons." But there was always the idea present of reducing these exceptional payments as much as possible, and it is here that tonnage and poundage comes in. Tonnage and poundage was Customs : the duties paid by merchants at the ports. Being no part of original royal income, it had to be *granted*. But all the instinct of the people liable to exceptional taxes was to lessen the burden of these by increasing, as much as possible, this the king's regular income, so that he need not come down on them, in the main landowners, for more. Hence these duties on merchandise coming into the Ports, though nominally granted by the Parliament, were in fact made a permanent part of the royal revenue, voted for life to each king for the last two centuries of English kingship, that is, the XVth and XVIth centuries.

When, at last, the strength of the popular monarchy began to decline under the new economic power of the gentry (based on the loot of Church land at the Reformation), an attack was made by the squires, lawyers, and merchants upon this age-long and sacred source of royal revenue, tonnage and poundage. The king's right to take it as a matter of course—which no one had questioned for more than 200 years—was denied, or discussed, under James I, and, after many years of struggle, it was destroyed. But we must

always remember that this was a Revolution. All tradition, the whole course of English administration over ten reigns, took the right of the king to levy Customs for granted.

This first Parliament, then, of Henry VII went through the routine of granting tonnage and poundage for life ; but also assisted at a startlingly novel thing : confiscation on an enormous scale. For in this Parliament Henry issued and had ratified an order for the seizing of all lands given by the Crown for the last thirty years. He also had them present a petition for his marriage with Elizabeth of York, and he celebrated it on the 18th of the following January, 1486.

The marriage with Elizabeth of York, January 18th, 1486.

He was in a quandary about this marriage. If he did not make it he certainly could not hold the throne. On the other hand, he dare not hold the throne by right of his wife, who was of the true blood-royal of England. He had to make the marriage, or he would not have remained king when once there had been time for armed opposition to arise. On the other hand, if he made the marriage before being crowned, it would have looked as though he had depended upon it for his kingship : hence the sham petition from Parliament. The marriage accomplished, he went on progress through England, and was fortunate enough to have a son born to him at Winchester at the earliest moment, on the 20th September of the same year. (They called him Arthur, a name recalling Welsh legend.) He had the further advantage, largely due to his own intrigue, of obtaining a papal Bull to confirm his right to the Crown.

The next thing that followed was an incident which shows very clearly how insecure was Henry's position with his subjects, especially after the economic revolution he had imposed in the seizing of lands, but also through his lack of moral power due to his lack of title. It is the incident of Lambert Simnel.

We have seen how one of Edward IV's sisters, Duchess of Burgundy, was still supporting the Yorkist cause. Another of Edward IV's sisters had married the Duke of Suffolk, John

de la Pole. Their son had been named heir to Richard III. His title was the Earl of Lincoln.[1]

On May 5th, 1487, he landed at Dublin—after consultation with his aunt, the Duchess of Burgundy—at the head of 2000 German mercenaries under the leadership of a certain Captain Martin Swart. On Whitsunday, May 25th, a lad named Lambert Simnel was crowned with enthusiasm in that town under the title of Edward VI. He was represented as being the young Edward, Earl of Warwick, now imprisoned in the Tower, of whom we have just spoken. Lambert Simnel was, as a fact, the son of a joiner in Oxford. Nothing but some resemblance to the royal family, and a similarity in age, can have made the fraud possible. But it is very important to note that the thing could never have happened unless there had been a permanent and widespread indignation against Henry's shameless usurpation, and a determination on all sides to undo it. Who supplied the very considerable sums for the attempt we do not know. It was clumsy, because the real Earl of Warwick was there in the Tower; he could be brought out at any moment and recognised by hundreds of people at court, and Henry was careful so to bring him out and have him recognised before shutting him up again. But the German mercenaries and half-armed Irish bodies with them landed in Lancashire after thus having crowned Lambert Simnel as Edward VI in Dublin, marched right across England to the Trent, intending to seize Newark. Henry's army met them near the village of Stoke, where on the 16th June, 1487, they came upon the main forces of the new king.

Episode of Lambert Simnel, 1487.

It is again an example of the doubtful hold of his throne that two-thirds of his army failed to join him; but the third

[1] Richard, Duke of York

Edward IV — Duchess of Burgundy — Elizabeth

Earl of Lincoln

which remained with Henry was properly armed, the Germans and Irishmen against them were ill-equipped; and the Battle of Stoke, as history calls it, was fought on the 16th June, 1487. It was decided in one morning after heavy fighting between the two little armies, and was a complete victory for the Tudors. Lincoln himself was killed.

What followed on the battle, however, complete success though it was, is a further example of the weakness of Henry's position. He thought it wise not to exasperate opinion by the murder of the wretched dupe Simnel, who, after all, was but a child. He made him a servant in his kitchen, and later a falconer. He was still alive on the eve of the Reformation under Henry VIII; no harm was done to him.

The principal effect of this fantastic attempt against the new and unpopular Tudor power was the establishment of a central High Court, superior to the local jurisdictions which had hitherto in the main dealt with all English judicial affairs. It was formed of the court officials and dependants of the Crown, notably of the court clerks; and because it sat in a room of the palace often used by former kings on great occasions, having a ceiling painted with stars on a blue ground, it was called "Star Chamber." It was a visible symbol of the new tyranny affirming the strength of a Renaissance kingship against the old nobility and against every kind of local power. It was the reaffirmation of the royal arbitrary right against those gradual breakdowns of such rights through routine and tradition in the lesser courts which had themselves, in their origins, proceeded from the royal power. It did good work on one side, for it confirmed kingship. It was used with a special vigour generations later, when the Stuarts were making their last attempt to save kingship against the growing power of their wealthier subjects. It was for the moment popular with the mass of men, as is all which impresses the power of a king upon the richer classes. But it had an evil side, in that it supported the new Tudor tyranny against the claim of the legitimate blood.

Star Chamber.

In the next three years the deciding point of English policy, coupled with Henry VII's determination to remain in power by any and all means, was the effort of the French Crown to absorb Brittany, the last great independent fief vassal to it. The Breton policy.

It was to the advantage of Henry VII to prove himself formidable to the French Crown. It was also to his advantage to prevent the maritime power of Brittany losing its independence and becoming subject to Paris. But the Tudor played the card of cunning—and, for the moment, lost his game.

It was from the dead Louis XI of France that Henry had learnt all his lessons : the power of a large treasury balance ; the superiority, in this new time, of patience over audacity, and of double dealing over direct attack.

Here was Brittany to be played against Louis XI's own son : its ports to be saved from a French domination which would menace the Channel, its revenue and recruiting field to be kept back from the power of France, and the heiress of the duchy to be prevented from a marriage into the royal house of Paris. Yet Henry avoided immediate frontal attack. He preferred an experiment which, if it failed, he could repudiate. His wife's uncle, Edward IV's brother-in-law, Lord Scales, was governor of the Isle of Wight. He asked (or was made to ask) for leave to raise volunteers in aid of the Bretons. Leave was refused, but the game winked at. Scales got together a few hundred archers and sailed.

The expedition crossed in May, 1488. The English contingent forming but a small part of larger Breton and mercenary forces. On the 28th July of that year, 1488, at St. Aubin-du-Cormier, the allied forces suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of the French commander and his artillery. Every Englishman present was reported killed, and certainly nearly all, including Scales, fell. Battle of St. Aubin-du-Cormier, July 28th, 1488.

Henry had saved himself from direct responsibility—but

his throne could not stand further national humiliation of this kind. He had miscalculated.

All the more necessary, therefore, was it for the shaken new dynasty to seek an alliance. The most obvious alliance was with the newly consolidated power arisen in Spain. For in Spain the kingdom of Aragon, inherited by King Ferdinand, had been united by marriage to the kingdom of Castille under its heiress Isabella ; six years before Bosworth the two monarchs had achieved full power, and much the greater part of the peninsula was thus combined under one military control.

The effect was very great. It meant a new kingdom in Europe, less than France in numbers and wealth, but much greater than England. Further, it was a kingdom about to expand by conquering the remnant of the Moors and uniting to itself all the South. Within a few years it was to achieve quite unexpected and overwhelming economic power through the discovery of the Americas. This new strength in Europe not only was naturally opposed to the consolidated French monarchy of older standing, but had the grudge that it desired to recover the Catalan-speaking south-eastern corner of the Pyrenees, of which Perpignan was the capital, and which the French Crown held in pledge, though not in full possession. In such a situation an alliance between the new Spanish united kingdom and the new Tudor dynasty was led up to by all the forces of the time, and what consolidated it was a matrimonial agreement. It was arranged that the little child Catherine (known in our history as Catherine of Aragon) younger daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, should be affianced to this new little heir to the Tudor throne, Arthur, who was a year younger than she.

The Spanish alliance.

This new direction of English foreign policy was expected to bear direct fruit in preventing the absorption of Brittany by the French Crown. In that it failed ; but it succeeded in giving the comparatively small power of England a solid continental support which lasted for the

better part of a lifetime—indeed, until Henry broke with the See of Rome and changed the future character of English history.

During all that interval the Anglo-Spanish alliance was in spirit and action a permanent thing. It was confirmed on the 27th March, 1489, by the Treaty of Medina-del-Campo. The marriage was solemnly agreed to. There was to be a dowry of 200,000 nobles, and the children were to be married as soon as they were of an age for union. What may perhaps be justly called the first modern diplomatic instrument in the history of England had appeared. And, indeed, the changed character of the time, the appearance of regular diplomacy side by side with regular bureaucracy at home, and all the modernities of the new kingship, were specially apparent in the continuous and developing conduct of foreign affairs.

The Treaty of Medina-del-Campo, March 27th, 1489.

Meanwhile, Henry VII made the situation a pretext for raising money. He accumulated very large sums of gold in his possession—to have a very large and increasing reserve of actual cash was the one fixed point in all his policy, upon which all the rest depended.

He had learnt in exile, and in the best possible school—the French atmosphere of Louis XI—what money meant now that chivalry was dying; and money became his excellent instrument.

He had demanded, just before the Spanish Treaty was signed, a very large sum indeed from a Parliament which he had summoned for that purpose. The excuse he gave was a coming French war. He asked for £100,000: just that enormous sum which more than once had been asked for in past crises and had always been impossible to collect.[1] His excuse was the old traditional one that he needed a regular

The attempt at exceptional taxation.

[1] Put in modern terms, compared with the present (1927) purchasing power of gold, that of 1489 gives one a multiple of about thirty-five.

He was asking *as an extra tax* rather less than what we should call "a pound a head" from his population—over and above the regular royal income of about £100,000, and the customs of £30,000 to £40,000.

army abroad of 10,000 archers for a whole year, and this would cost £10 a man, say £350 an archer in the money of the present day, and somewhat more in the social values of our money.

It was nearly three times the conventional grant of a "tenth and fifteenth," and it was at that time nearly three times the regular customs revenue which, as a matter of course, now belonged to the king without interference from the taxpayer, and which produced £30,000 at the beginning of his reign, rising to £40,000 before the end of it.

To raise this enormous sum of £100,000 there appeared once again the old idea of a tax of 10 per cent. on income added to 1 per cent. on capital—meaning by this word, real working capital—exempting the capital of the smaller people. He got barely a quarter of what he asked, and as it was the demand led to rioting in the North. Moreover, there was no serious French campaign, only attempts with insufficient forces. And at the end of 1491 the whole policy collapsed; the heiress of Brittany, Anne, was married on December 6th of that year to Charles, the King of France, and Brittany had lost its independence. The Channel was, indeed, crossed with a considerable force in the autumn of 1492. There was a futile siege of Boulogne. But a treaty called the Treaty of Etaples made peace with France on the 3rd November, 1492. It was on terms of cash payment (£25,000 half-yearly as arrears of sums due from Brittany and the old French pension), and that was the end.

Henry had drawn money into his treasury in all sorts of ways, apart from the levy which had failed. He had done it on the pretext of the French war, which had never been really fought, and year by year his accumulation was getting greater. He had acted wisely in thus persistently increasing his balances, for it was with this weapon of gold that he overcame what was to be by far the greatest peril of his life and reign: the adventure of a man who is known in English history as "Perkin Warbeck."

To that adventure I must give now what small space can be afforded it in such pages as these, though there is matter for many a book in its discussion. It is one of the most interesting, unsolved problems in history.

The affair of the so-called "Perkin Warbeck" claimant.

There had appeared in Ireland—just as Lambert Simnel had there appeared—a young man of remarkable beauty, excellent carriage, accent, and manner, *and recognised by those who met him* (*many of whom were able to test his identity from acquaintance*) *as the second son of Edward IV, Prince Richard of York, who was rumoured to have been murdered in the Tower at the orders of his uncle, Richard III.*

This apparition found Yorkist support in Ireland no longer what it had been. The Tudor interest had, since the Simnel fiasco, grown stronger in that country, and Henry had organised a new government in the pale. He could not, therefore, act from Ireland as Lambert Simnel had done, but he had a much stronger position supported by something much more than the ill-armed Irish levies, to wit, the courts of Europe.

He had been received at the French court and treated there as the legitimate King of England, with a train of at least 100 of the English Yorkist gentry about him. The Treaty of Etaples put an end to this. But he was received by Margaret of Burgundy, who recognised him as her nephew.[1] He was also received by the Emperor Maximilian with full honours, and accepted without a doubt for what he claimed to be.

Henry's power, based at home upon vast confiscations and a rapidly accumulating mass of gold, worked abroad through a well-organised network of spies. His tyranny was becoming an efficient tyranny. He needed all its efficiency at this moment: the Plantagenet tradition was certainly

[1] It is very interesting to note that he was recognised by Clifford, who knew Richard's face and affirmed this claimant to be Richard. Later Clifford was bought by Henry VII and used as one of his innumerable spies, but we remark that while he was independent, and *before* he had handled Henry's money, he had no doubt of the claimant's identity with Edward IV's son.

that of most people in England, and of nearly every one who counted in Europe. At home, Henry met the crisis by creating a terror. He ordered executions in the end of 1494—not very great in number, but carefully selected to produce their effect—and on the 16th February, 1495, he even put to death that Stanley through whose aid he had won Bosworth, in such dread was he of even his closest friends. He affirmed perpetually—and particularly, too—in his foreign correspondence and to the reigning heads of houses, that the young man who claimed to be King of England, a true Plantagenet heir (it was admitted that his elder brother had been killed or at least was dead), was no more than a certain Peter Warbeck (or Osbeck), the son of a family in Tournai which lived by the water carriage of the Scheldt. He said that the fact was notorious. He caused every sort of ridicule to be poured on the Pretender, and there was got up for him in derision the nick-name of Perkin, to turn his proper name, Peter, into a mockery. But all this had not got rid of the menace; and men could not help remarking that the people who recognised this handsome, well-bred young man, with his appearance of lineage and courtly manners, as the true Plantagenet, were those who had an opportunity of judging. They saw him face to face for weeks at a time, whereas in England he had not been seen.

The claimant was cruising off Deal at the emperor's expense with a few ships in July, 1495. Henry laid a trap for him which failed. The Tudor spies met a landing party, raising cheers for the Plantagenet cause. When the landing party had exposed themselves by accepting such aid the spies betrayed them, and their leaders were put to death. The claimant himself, luckily for him, had not landed. He made a descent on Waterford, and failed (August, 1495). He proceeded to Scotland, where he was received in State at Stirling by James IV, married to a lady of the highest rank, one of the Gordons, and openly recognised as King of England.

It was the moment when, in protest against taxation for the Scottish war, another local insurrection broke out against the Tudor, that of Cornwall. A body of Cornishmen in the summer of 1497 marched right across south England, and were only defeated (by royal artillery) in front of London at Blackheath. The Cornish rebellion, 1497.

The crisis came in the autumn of that year, and it was the claimant's lack of funds which decided it. The King of Scotland could help him, but not sufficiently. After one more fruitless effort in Ireland he landed in the West, gathered in one way and another a body of 8000 men, and with true Plantagenet courage but none of the Plantagenet capacity, attacked Exeter. He had no artillery—and artillery was becoming more and more the arbiter of sieges. In two days' desperate and quite futile effort against the walls (September 17th and 18th, 1497) he had 400 men killed without making the other side lose one man. His position was hopeless, he fled to sanctuary at Beaulieu, off Southampton water. But he could not remain in sanctuary for ever. He was bound to fall into Henry's hands sooner or later, and he decided on the only course that could save his life. He surrendered, was brought to the king at Taunton, there recited all he was expected to recite to his own dishonour, presumably writing a letter in that name to a supposed mother in Belgium, admitting the name Warbeck, the base origin and all the rest of it : then he was led back to Westminster by November 27th. Surrender of the claimant at Exeter, autumn, 1497.

What follows is very curious. After imprisonment he was released and lived honourably at court, watched, but in no way confined. So it went on for months. The policy was cunningly calculated on the case of Lambert Simnel, propaganda by way of finesse : to make the world certain the young man was a mere pretender by sparing his life at the price of admitting his fraud, and by emphasising the contemptuous freedom allowed him compared with the hard treatment of a *real* claimant ; for young Warwick, who was

undoubtedly a Plantagenet, the heir of Clarence, and male heir of England if the princes were dead, was kept strictly shut up in the Tower. But all must have noticed that, whereas the absurd Simnel was made a cook boy, and glad of the chance, *this* claimant was admitted among his supposed equals.

At any rate, it seems to have been Henry's policy to weaken the mysterious stranger's claim by treating it as negligible.

If, as seems certain, that was the Tudor's game, it failed. The claimant suddenly left court in June, 1498. He was caught within a few miles of London, exposed in the stocks, made to read his confession publicly,[1] *but again his life was spared*, though he was shut up in the Tower with Warwick. It was only some months later that the Tudor gradually determined to get rid of both the young men by death. There was again serious peril reported to him by his spies. A secret agent—a new thing in English history, and characteristic of all the Tudor sovereigns except Mary—one Cleymound had been employed to pose as a friend of the two young prisoners and to propose a method of escape. The plot was laid, their conversations reported, and they were put to death. The claimant was hanged, drawn, and quartered on Saturday, November 23rd, 1499: a scaffold confession was published. Five days later, poor young Warwick, after a public condemnation in which he pleaded guilty to the plot—presumably in hopes of saving his life—was similarly half-strangled, disembowelled alive, and then cut up. Henry, meanwhile, was tortured in soul. He redoubled his devotions. He seemed to onlookers grown suddenly twenty years older.

He and Warwick are put to death, November, 1499.

Now what are we to think of the historical puzzle presented by the gallant and fine young man whom so many, including his royal father's sister, swore to be King of

[1] Note the appearance of a new instrument of government. The "Confession" was *printed* and circulated broadcast by the king.

England, whom so many more affirmed to be a waterman's child of Tournai ?

Here, as in every debated point of English history, we must begin by putting out of our minds the official history of text-book and examination, of the modern compulsory educational system and the universities ; and when I say, " putting it out of our minds," I mean not denying it but considering the evidence alone. Is the weight of evidence for or against the claim which this young man had made ? It is, on a full consideration, against that claim.

On the one hand, the positive evidence we have against him is weak. His so-called confessions were issued under a despotic government, perhaps as the price of his life : certainly under an authority which could publish or suppress what it chose. A letter purporting to be written to his mother by him as " Warbeck " comes from the same source : in general, there is nothing but what any unscrupulous and absolute power can always produce in such cases. Further, the positive evidence in his favour is very strong. It is true that the foreign courts which supported him had political reasons for so doing. But the general recognition of him on all sides, the bearing and character of the young fellow, his appearance, are very strong arguments, especially in such a time. You could not manufacture a prince at will in such a world out of a quayside boy from the lanes of a lowland town, and we must remember that very many private men, with all to lose and fully acquainted with the Plantagenet blood, the lad's appearance as a boy, the manner and features of his supposed father, King Edward, were personally devoted to him. Further, we must remember that if there was political reason for supporting him as a false claimant, there was far stronger political reason on the other side for denouncing him although he should have been the true heir. When he was beaten, his wife was content to abandon him. She was remarkable for marrying three further husbands in succession, and her indifference is no evidence for or against

The problem presented by the Pretender.

her first. Above all, we remember that Lancastrian history had all its own way in England for generations, and were it not for one most powerful argument on the other side, we might legitimately set down the whole story of "Perkin Warbeck" and his base origin in the group of falsehoods which the Lancastrian, and, still more, later Tudor, tradition —worst of all, the Elizabethan—have stamped upon our history. In the great quarrel between the old chivalric tradition and the new and baser forces which the Tudors represented, the latter were the victors, and history has been written by their dependants. But what seems conclusive against this famous claimant to the Plantagenet throne is surely this: *his inability to account for the seven years' interval between Bosworth and his first appearance in* 1492. It is that which none of those who have very properly rejected the official story can get over, and that is why I say that the weight of evidence is against the claim. If there were a consecutive story of those seven years—how so much was spent in prison, and where, how much in hiding, and where, with what abettors—that story would, of course, have been denied by the Government in power, and by the future historian, especially the modern official historian, whose business it is to support a Tudor legend. But there is no such consecutive story; and the only reason one can give for its absence is that not even the claimant's urgent need could produce a plausible one.

The capital evidence against him.

With the turn of the century then the dynasty was secure through the two deaths, one of them the execution of an opponent who had made open war on the throne; the other, that of Warwick, no more than a common murder. There did, indeed, remain one important claimant—Edmund de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk,[1] son of Edward IV's sister, Elizabeth, and brother of the Lincoln who had been killed at Stoke.

[1] Suffolk had a younger brother Richard, who wandered on the continent, and was called the King of England after his brother's execution under Henry VIII. He died in battle on the French side at Pavia.

He had twice fled, and had at last (1501-2) taken refuge in the imperial free town of Aix-la-Chapelle. Henry tried to buy him from the Emperor for £10,000, which was at first refused, then accepted; but the emperor had no power to expel him from a free town, and he lived on. We shall read later how Henry the VII's son put him to death; but there was henceforward (after 1502) no further serious menace in England to the Tudor dynasty. The blood of the two young men taken from the Tower had cemented it.

The marriage of Catherine of Aragon, November 15th, 1501.

Meanwhile was concluded that Spanish marriage which was to have such strange and unforeseen conclusions thirty years on. Catherine of Aragon landed at Plymouth Hoe on October 2nd, 1501. She was married to Prince Arthur in St. Paul's Cathedral on November 15th. Now, very shortly afterwards, in the April of the next year, 1502, the young Prince Arthur died. His mother, broken by the blow, died herself in childbirth at the beginning of the next year, February 4th, 1503.

Death of Arthur, April 2nd, 1502.

Here was a new situation. A young prince for whose popularity everything had been done, and who really had become a figure in the eyes of the populace, strengthening his usurping father, was gone. A child of eleven years, Henry, the second brother (later to be Henry VIII) hitherto perhaps destined for the Church, and of no prominence in the public mind, had suddenly become the heir to the throne.

The chief bond with Spain, the Tudor's new ally, was weakened for the moment. There might be talk of Catherine's being sent back home; on the other hand, the now elderly king was free to make a new marriage for himself, and by such a marriage to prop up his throne once more. The first policy he suggested was extravagant in its nastiness; but it is very valuable as proof that the marriage of the young boy Arthur had not yet been consummated. It was a proposal that Catherine should marry her nominal father-in-law, Henry! In the light of that proposal, all the much later talk which surrounded the divorce of Henry VIII on the

plea of Arthur's marriage is clearly ridiculous. Anyhow, such an abomination was too strong for the public stomach —Henry's would stand anything—and in particular did the Spanish Queen, Catherine's mother, denounce it as intolerable. A contract was therefore made between the child of eleven years who was to be Henry VIII, and the so-called widow of his dead elder brother. A papal dispensation was duly obtained after a formal betrothal and contract. So ended 1503. The child heir betrothed to Catherine (and also having been made to put in a formal protest, useful in diplomacy against Spain) the marriage was to take place when little Henry should be of marriageable age.[1]

Prince Henry affianced to Catherine of Aragon.

At the same time, August 7th, 1502, was concluded another marriage, to be of lasting effect upon England and Scotland. Henry's daughter, Margaret, aged fifteen, was married to James IV of Scotland.

The Queen of Spain, from whom the Crown of Castille would descend, was not far from death (she died in November, 1504). Her heiress was Catherine's eldest sister, Joan: never very sane ("la Loca") and destined to be quite mad in time. Against Joan's claim to Castille her father Ferdinand protested. She married Philip, the heir to the Empire, and it was Henry VII's part to play a tortuous game between all these conflicting interests of Ferdinand, Philip, Joan, the French Crown, the imperial power, and the rest. It happened that a south-westerly gale threw Philip and his wife Joan on to the Dorsetshire coast in the first days of 1506. Henry received them as very honoured guests, but used the fact that they were in his power to make Philip hand over Suffolk from his refuge; when he had got that claimant to the throne, he shut him up in the Tower. Henry signed a solemn engagement that Suffolk should not be killed. Nor was he—till the next reign and seven years after. For the Tudors were devoted to murder. To add to

[1] Prince Henry had been born on June 28th, 1491; Catherine on the 15th or 16th of December, 1485.

the complications, Philip shortly afterwards died; whereupon it occurred to Henry VII, who was astonishingly shameless in these matters, that he might marry the mad widow. He even put pressure on the unfortunate young Catherine, whom he kept in penury, and she yielded so far as to write a letter supporting this project of a marriage between her cynical father-in-law (and former suitor) and her mad widowed sister. The whole affair is only a degree less revolting than that which had connected her own name with that of Henry. Happily for the honour of this country and its history, the proposal came to nothing. Henry was sickening, and not long after, on April 21st, 1509, he died.

. . . . . .

The character of the time.

This bare narrative of the political events, which marked the origin of the Tudor novelty, the fruit of the Lancastrian usurpation, gives no conception of the height and movement of the time. The days of Henry VII were those in which all the fruit of the XVth century Renaissance was maturing. Its influence came somewhat late to England, because the Wars of the Roses had oddly coincided here with the vast expansion in knowledge and the activities of the mind which mark Europe after the fall of Constantinople.

The comparative peace of Henry's reign, constantly imperilled though it was, allowed some part of the harvest to be tardily gathered: a new English scholarship began, and an expansion of English commerce, some slight expansion also, or rather consolidation, in the trained use of the new vernacular English tongue: now the bond of all the society of the realm since nearly 100 years: [1] the natural speech of all classes, even the highest, and something henceforward distinguishing this

[1] I do not say *over* a hundred years, for though English begins to be the common tongue of Englishmen in the later XIVth century, yet French is still widespread among the educated as their native tongue for a long time after. Thus William of Wykeham, of no particular birth, wrote in French and presumably thought in it. True, he was born under the older conditions, but he lived on into the XVth century.

kingdom in a sharply separate manner from the world of Europe overseas, and particularly from France. Moreover, this reign, in spite of the king's lack of title and his unpopularity, felt here in England what was being felt in France : a national consolidation, based on a rising national feeling which stood rival to the general conscience of Christendom. The then strength of Patriotism has been very foolishly exaggerated—turned into something after the modern fashion ; but that is no reason for ignoring it. The England of 1509 had already become a society in which men were nearly as ready to sacrifice themselves for the national idea as for the conception of loyalty to a political head (the old feudal tradition), or even for the still solid conception of a united Christendom.

We must not put things out of proportion. The idea that Christendom could cease to be united would have seemed not only shocking, but impossible, to the men of that time ; but what I mean is that in the divisions and conflicts between the various parts of Christendom, the nation was already becoming a rallying-point. Above all, Patriotism had become something which a Dynasty could use with increasing effect.

Again, all over Europe at this moment the strength of the prince was evident, the power of the executive, whether acting in a small German State or in the papal territories, or in the Spanish kingdoms or in France. The old conflict between a powerful, armed, half-independent nobility and the Crown was failing ; and the Crown stood out more and more isolated and supreme.

In England particularly was this the case. The Royal monopoly in artillery (and gunpowder), the Royal monopoly in printing, were powerful agents of despotism, and were more thorough here than on the continent.

We must not put down too much to the Wars of the Roses and their slaughter of the great families, though this had its effect. We may put down more to the dying-out of many families and their ending in single heiresses, for the number of children in the wealthiest class at that time was often small.

In our particular case of England, we must emphasise one economic factor: the new wealth of the Crown.

Great economic power was now for a generation undisputed in the hands of the king, and there had arisen a tradition never henceforward to be broken, that a Government, whether monarchic (as it remained until the days of Elizabeth) or aristocratic, with a crown for figurehead (as it became after the days of the Stuarts), must naturally demand, in more or less regular fashion, those very large sums which in the Middle Ages had been regarded as exceptional grants.

Under Henry VII himself there proceeded a great fiscal revolution of which historians have not made enough. We have seen what a drastic stroke was the taking over of all the land alienated by the Crown after 1455. A society suffering an experience of such violence is trained to almost any demand upon it in the way of economic shock, and Henry VII supplemented this and all other forms of more or less open revenue gathering by perpetual private extortion.

The process was very often indirectly and sometimes directly ordered, his agents simply saying that as a man was rich he must pay. Indeed, during all the last six years of his reign (nearly seven years) Henry VII called no Parliament, and therefore demanded no general grant, but lived on resources of this kind. Legendary among his agents have become the names of two men, Empson and Dudley, the second of whom we must particularly remember, because from his own pickings he founded a family which continued to disturb the history of England for more than a century. Unlike Empson, who was the son of a sieve-maker of Towcester, Dudley was of territorial birth: the son of the Sheriff of Sussex, and distantly connected with the noble family whose name he carried. More significant than their legend is the fact that these two civil servants were used as they were—purely as the dependants of the king, without hereditary claim of any kind. It was characteristic of the new monarchy everywhere that it was building up a bureaucracy

of this sort: not to be compared, of course, to our modern machine, with its coercive power of secret service, organised police, and professional fighting services, but still a beginning from which arose the all-powerful executive of to-day, against which no citizen has any appreciable power to react. All has risen uninterruptedly from these beginnings under the first Tudor, who gave up his wizened and too-experienced soul, prematurely aged, in his fifty-third year; carrying with him, it would seem, all his evil unrepented.

Since he began so much, and was so truly an originator and maker, not only of his own dynasty but of all its society, we must not pass on to the last few years of Catholic England under his son without some attempt to appreciate the personality of Henry Tudor.

Character of Henry Tudor.

The judgments passed upon the man are conflicting. The material for such judgments is insufficient, and the motives at work in those who left such material are of a special kind, which must be allowed for.

Bacon—whose life of Henry VII remained for centuries the basis of all official opinion upon him, and has only recently been criticised—gave a portrait which we moderns may call unfavourable, yet it was not unfavourable in Bacon's eyes, nor in those of Henry's granddaughter Elizabeth, in whose time the writer was considering his work. It represents a man full of will, especially wise, strongly moved by despotic motives, reserved and painfully cunning. Such a portrait we to-day are repelled by. Bacon was not repelled by it, nor were his contemporaries. As for Polydore Vergil, he cannot praise the astuteness of his hero too much. Henry VII lived in a time of high intelligence and very base morals: as one of the Renaissance despots, he comes out less black than the rest, but also somewhat baser and meaner.

In trying to get a right estimate we must certainly admit what little makes the man more human. For example, we know that, like all despots with a weak title, he cultivated

the gratitude of the unfortunate—and it is probably true that he had some real and genuine sympathy with them. His character (coming from his Beaufort mother much more than from his rather ridiculous Welsh ancestor, with his lack of all decent social claim) was not the "Celtic" thing which to-day it is sometimes called. He was not impulsive, he was not apparently sensitive: he was most certainly not chivalric. He probably did not understand what the sentiment of chivalry was, but it is presumable that something more than policy came into his frequent gifts to insignificant men and women, to his relief of the distressed, and to his ready accessibility.

As for his supposed love of music and of the arts, that is no more than the general tone of his time. He dressed magnificently; he imported his gorgeous Italian stuffs and went about in too much jewellery. But that, I repeat, was as much a part of policy in a king of insecure standing as it was of fashion, and, at any rate, hardly proves a personal appreciation of beautiful things.

As a private individual he would have been avaricious, for though his grasping at an individual private personal fund, and his accumulation of it by all means, was a necessary part of his policy, it was also part of his character. Most contemporaries saw it only as the immediate and scandalous oppression of individuals, and particularly of rich individuals; but the new kingship of the Renaissance had to accumulate such funds, and the very reason that his son Henry VIII left a broken inheritance to his line was that *he* had not that power of accumulation. Had Henry VIII been less spendthrift it would have been better for England.

Was Henry VII responsible for the introduction of Humanism to England? Hardly. It had to come to England after the splendid initiative of the papal court half a lifetime before. It came late to England because of the civil wars, and if it came in strongly under Henry VII, it was rather through the peace than through his own effort.

It was under his auspices, though not particularly due to his initiative, that the academic side of the Renaissance reached England. Five years after Bosworth, Greek was being taught in Oxford. Before his death many in both the English universities had begun to separate themselves, as they did abroad, into those stirred by the new studies and those who preferred the old curriculum and all its traditions: the Greeks and the Trojans. He received, but did not sufficiently reward, the scholars of that novel movement (notably Erasmus); yet it must be remembered in his favour that Erasmus drew a pleasant picture of his home—in the disfavour of both that the great scholar went away hungry, and whined about it.

Henry must be praised upon the intellectual, if not upon the moral side for that use of spies, that creation of an Intelligence Service: ruthless, grossly uncandid, ubiquitous, which was handed on as a tradition to his descendants and created, transformed by the Cecils in the days of his granddaughter Elizabeth, the chief instrument of their tyranny. By it they rooted out the national tradition and religion of the English people. *His* motive in creating that Intelligence Department was both obvious and necessary. He had no right to be king, and was perpetually fighting his hand.

Here, at the risk of repetition, I must insist upon what that position was.

Let us remember that in 1485, when he achieved to his own surprise the happy accident of Bosworth with an inferior and largely foreign force. All elderly men still living could remember the origins of his line. A groom who privately lived with, but almost certainly was not married to, the Queen Dowager, and for whom desperate efforts managed to put up a pretence of gentility, was his grandfather; and though his father had been the playmate of a reigning Lancastrian king, the original taint was a heavy burden to bear.

When Henry VII seized the throne the time that had passed since the days of that grandfather was no greater

than that which has passed since the moment of writing these lines and the Boer War; when he died it was only twenty-four years since he had supplanted the Plantagenets.

In connection with his supplanting the Plantagenets, let us return to that capital, illuminating, vivid, incident of his reign: the murder of his wife's nephew, Warwick.

I call it murder because Henry himself must have known perfectly well that the half-witted young man was innocent of the things of which he was accused. Let us be plain spoken upon so plain a matter. Warwick was put to death because he was the legitimate male heir, while Henry was nothing of the sort. Let us remember what Warwick was. He was legitimate male heir, though a child not ten years old, when Henry had been circled with the gold band of the fallen Plantagenet on Bosworth Field. Warwick was the son and the heir of George, Duke of Clarence, Edward IV's brother. There was no question at all in the mind of contemporary men but that Warwick was by right the male heir—though the men of the time were both too exhausted and too callous to support the claim, and the claimant was, through his lack of physical energy as he grew up (a prisoner) and through his lack of initiative and will, what is called to-day "impossible." Men of that day believed far more firmly in hereditary right than they believe to-day (for instance) in the right of majorities at elections, or even in the right of great wealth to purchase men's consciences. And Warwick had been put to death in a very barbarous and (what is more important) dishonest fashion.

The poor young fellow was only twenty-four years old. The most that could be pretended, and it is not proved, was that he had very naturally accepted an opportunity of escape from a dungeon.

Even if the informer's story be true—it sounds rubbish—of Warwick's knocking on the floor (in that thick-walled Tower of London) and bidding Perkin be of good cheer, that was not treason. Worse than this was Warwick's pleading

guilty. The unfortunate boy certainly would not have pleaded guilty unless he had been lured into doing so—whether from the promise of a milder punishment, or in some other panic, we do not know. At any rate, he should have been the King of England by all the ideas of the time, and the motive for putting him out of the way could not have been anything but the motive of securing the usurper. That passionate cry which Catherine of Aragon let escape years afterwards, that her marriage had been consecrated in blood, was but the reflection of what must have been said in whispers on all sides throughout that tragedy.

We have also to consider, in judging Henry VII, his women—factors too much left out in our appreciation of past history. Here was an only son, very delicate, left an orphan in babyhood; his mother a pious ascetic, even learned, but a stunted woman; his wife, a person for whom he certainly felt no affection, and even—I believe this to be true—a certain repulsion. Why her beauty is praised, I have never understood. Her portrait gives no ground for it. Her father, indeed, was a very handsome man, but she herself has an insipid foolish face, heavy and worthless. Her memory is redeemed perhaps by a love of gardening: but that is no great matter.

It must be remembered also that he was the son of a woman who had borne him at far too early an age, and that also counts. The distaste which he seems to have felt for his wife was aggravated by the constant irritation of her own superior claim. He felt all the time that he was only *allowed* to be king—men said it openly—because he had married the heiress of York. And she had nothing in her to make him proud of that connection.

Again, though on the tall side, he had no presence. Men praised in youth his yellow hair, his fine skin. They praised in age his reticence, his industry, his tenacity of policy, in all of which he is somewhat worthy of praise. But he did not impress men with any majesty. I have seen it written that

he was feared more than he was loved: a very commonplace judgment upon any man, who, without right, achieves power and maintains it by terror. But no man can govern safely under those conditions; and it is remarkable what a complete lack of personal enthusiasm for him there was. No man seemed to care whether he lived or died. He was inordinately superstitious, but this one must expect in the diseased final stage of the Middle Ages. It is not improbable that the murder of Warwick itself was connected with superstition, and with Henry's fear of a prophecy.

How did he look back at that murder when he came to die? At any rate, he knew that he had succeeded—not only by his own qualities. A country exhausted by a lifetime of revolution, a crown enforced by the new use of artillery (which crushed rebellion at home and had begun to dominate Ireland), a time in which very great new material powers were arising, all under the control of the Crown, these were in his favour. But much of the result was his own work. He made it his business to show great pomp, not only in his own public appearance, but in that of his queen. She was crowned with the utmost splendour, and Henry himself was but a distant spectator of the scene. Read the minute regulation of etiquette with which he surrounded the throne, so different from the easier popular standing of the last generally accepted Plantagenet, Edward IV, and it is apparent how much his own long planning aided the rooting of his line.

Is he to be praised or blamed for his Irish policy? Neither. It would have been pursued under any king after the Lancastrian episode. The Lancastrian episode had let Ireland slide. All through the xvth century the English connection grew weaker and weaker. Even in the Pale—the only part that had English government, Dublin to Dundalk, and some 30 miles inland—Irish speech was increasing, and Irish dress. The interior was wholly Irish—either under the absorbed Angevin baronial families or under native kings.

What might have been a true and increasing union between England and Ireland (the policy of Richard II), a long Lancastrian usurpation had destroyed. It was too weak at home, too dependent on its own wealthier subjects, to pursue a wise policy beyond the western sea. Even Edward IV could not remedy the ill effect of negligence, nor had his father's brief but wise government of the Pale done so. The chance for an agreed unity of these islands had been lost through the crime of Henry IV.

When, therefore, Ireland had twice been used as a base for claimants against his throne, and when Henry had been compelled to make some show of power there, he still governed by an Irish lord—Kildare; and though he reduced the independence of the Irish Council or Parliament, that only applied to the few miles of the Pale. *He* did not even attempt a conquest. The beginnings of that were left for his son. But it is remarkable that already, under Henry VII, the instrument which affected that conquest, the universal instrument of power in the transition to modern times, *artillery* had appeared. When O'Neill's castle was shattered by Kildare's guns a new era had opened: an era in which the local chieftain, with his Irish court and law, could no longer hold a castle securely against the official monopoly of gunpowder and cannon.

A few days before his death Henry signed his will, elaborately and carefully designed, and leaving money for 10,000 Masses to be said within a month of his passing. He knew when he came to die that the whole State was changed, and could not but feel himself one chief agent in that change, he could not but be proud of it. Though the new strong life of the Renaissance had come late to England, he had used it, he had patronised its arts, he had understood from the example of his model, Louis XI, King of France, what had now taken the place of dead feudalism. He had not only reduced the castles and killed private war, he had also created a detailed foreign policy. That foreign policy was continuous, and for his own purposes admirable.

His servants, under his direction, provided for regular levies of men when they should be necessary for war, utilising the local power and the nobles as recruiting officers to provide him with troops, but no longer as independent commanders. It may be said of him that while the general process of the new culture had come late to England, on account of its long turmoil and anarchy under the Wars of the Roses, yet *he* had consolidated a truly centralised monarchy better organised in degree and earlier in date than those of his rivals abroad. Of course, England was still but a little kingdom ; a third of the French monarchy, perhaps, in population ; a third at the most in available surplus wealth : yet Henry had given it, before he died, a position in Europe which it had not had during the distracted lifetime to which he succeeded.

He missed the commercial possibilities of the time (he might have used Columbus, whose brother sought his patronage long before serving Spain). The Genoese Cabot spied out the North American coast for him—but it came to little. Commerce grew at a rate of about 1 per cent. a year, but it was not the king's doing.

He did, however, provide the beginnings of a navy, adding to the less than half a dozen ships which his predecessors owned, and laying down larger craft than they had thought possible. Under him, and perhaps through him, was built in 1488 that " First Rater " (as a long future generation were to call such large king's ships more than a century hence) the " Henri Grace à Dieu," which may later have been the " Regent " (it must not be confounded with his son's great vessel of the same name). This boat was a fine achievement for the day, a thing of over 1000 tons, carrying 700 men, with a large complement of guns. He built another almost sister ship, " The Sovereign," to accompany her, and under him we get the first dry dock at Portsmouth. Though a fighting force at sea was for generations to be an improvised thing, yet Henry VII provided an official nucleus for such

forces. If James II may be called, more than 150 years later, the founder of the British Navy (and it is a just title), yet also is it true that Henry VII's policy lay at the inception of that force.

For my part, I cannot but respect him for having left a monument, though I know that these things are accidental: for if mere monuments were the test of a man, the astonishing work at Cambridge of which Henry VI laid the foundation stone, is a far greater thing. But it is not insignificant that the building which he set up as a sort of shrine to the half-sainted Henry VI should now be familiarly called after his own name, "Henry VII's Chapel," the lady chapel of Westminster Abbey. Nor is it insignificant, I think, that the stone symbols of the place, the little animals crawling up the flying buttresses, are toads.

(C) The End

(April 22nd, 1509, to June 18th, 1525—16 Years)

Prince Henry, at his father's death, was not yet eighteen —he had been born in June, 1491.

He was a big, hearty lad with pudgy face, reddish hair, which later darkened, and grey-green eyes ; with some aptitude for sports, a good rider and archer, and (as yet) thoroughly healthy in body.

Henry at his accession.

He was a regular Woodville, of the heavy type produced by many generations of Wiltshire bacon in the large farm-house (or small squire's house) of that recently promoted family ; but he had much more than his mother's intelligence, or than any we hear of in her relatives, and it had been well trained in that day of revived classical learning. Moreover, he had two special advantages here, uncommon in the princes of his age : music and theology.

Contemporaries could not praise him enough. He was such a relief after his father ! He united York and Lancaster on paper (Woodville and Tudor in the flesh). He was a harbinger of domestic peace. He was very young. He looked jolly in the people's eyes. Those who looked from closer by into his own would have found them already rather dull, though hardly (as yet) coarsened or spoilt by appetite indulged.

In one still so young his guidance in public affairs by others, his lack of industry, his abandonment of close policy for personal diversion, seemed no evils : nor were they. His disastrous outbursts against those who managed him came later—probably with illness. Of such, in this his youth, there was no sign.

These first sixteen years, then, of Henry VIII's reign—the last of wholly Catholic England, the end of so many living centuries—I shall conclude briefly. They have little significance save as a breathing space before the catastrophe that was to follow them.

The boy's first act was to assure the Spanish ambassador that he was determined to marry Catherine. The young woman had been the attraction of his entry into manhood: once and again he had expected union with her. His shrivelled father's sly policies and delays, all based on money, had increased his ardour. He would now be satisfied.

She was not quite half through her twenty-fourth year, about five and a half years older than he—at his age such a difference, often fatal in later life, is an added spur.

Of his and her moral right to such a union there could be no question. Apart from all question of papal dispensation, no one believed for a moment that the earlier child-marriage with Prince Arthur had been other than purely formal: Henry least of all. His own father's disgraceful proposal of a marriage between himself and Catherine is sufficient proof. The regularity of the new marriage was taken (quite rightly) for granted, and Henry himself was the first to bear witness to this proof at a later date. When she was married to Henry by the Archbishop of Canterbury (on June 3rd) it was as a maid, in white, and with loosened hair.

The young man was popular. He was still genial. He had been very well taught, as I have said; spoke and wrote French at least as easily as he did English; was a passable Latin scholar. But had he not enjoyed half these advantages he would still have been a favourite, because his accession promised some real social repose and security after more than two lifetimes of uncertainty and turmoil.

Ever since the peasants' revolt of 1381, England had been living in one long fever of revolution, defeat, and civil war, with a single brief interlude of feverish success abroad, and one of briefer exhausted peace at home. Now came a mon-

arch who was outwardly a vigorous youth, and one with prospect of a long reign.

His title (though he was but the second in a line with hardly any title at all) was old enough to serve ; he had no serious rivals. Church and State were each solid. There was no hint of disaffection anywhere. In religion especially was England again enjoying that spiritual peace which had been her peculiar privilege for centuries, and which had only been disturbed for a moment in the turmoil of social unrest a century before.

Religious feud was over. The Lollards were long dead and forgotten. Of all Christian Europe, England was the province which seemed at this moment the surest of an uninterrupted Catholic future. There was here no confusion of conflicting rites as in the East, of ritual complaints as in Central Europe, of Jew allied with Moor against the State, as in Spain ; of Islam perverting men as in Albania. The Italian troubles had hardly affected England at all. The worldliness of the corrupted Papacy had been less noticed and less protested here than in any other part of the West. The unity of Christendom, the tradition and the practice of the Church, in service and doctrine, were taken for granted—though not without a certain indifference which commonly accompanies this sort of religious content.

It was Henry's eminent good fortune (he knew not how to use it—few men do who marry young) that heaven had sent him a perfect wife. For some years Catherine of Aragon, in spite of heavy burdens, ruled him in private affairs, as did Wolsey in public. All this was in his favour.

A close observer could see in the young king characters somewhat perilous, though his bearing, as a whole, was high. He was indolent by nature, in the sense in which men vivacious and active in pleasure and intellectual exercises may often be really indolent. He tended, as I have said, to leave things to others. All his life long he was acted for by some other more consecutive and disciplined male mind ; Wolsey,

Cromwell, the Seymours. If strength means violence of appetite and whim, and an unfailingly violent determination to satisfy both, then he was strong. But if we mean by weakness an inability to control oneself in appetite, and an incapacity for prolonged, tenacious, and ordered work upon a plan—then certainly Henry was very weak.

I have mentioned Wolsey. He was the first of those who captured that conduct of the State which, in those days, was properly the king's affair, and to which Henry—had he had more character—would have devoted himself. It is a pity that the queen did not thus take over the public management of royalty, as she did the private. But she was absorbed in child-bearing—and with what tragedy ! [1]

Wolsey.

Wolsey [2] was a man of great capacity : a big head, big body, and sound digestion. He could impose himself, and he could impose a plan. He was a continuous, detailed worker, and a multifarious one. He suffered from ambition, and he did great harm—indirectly—to England. But he was not only the leading Englishman of his day : he was also, perhaps, the most typical Englishman.

It will help anyone to understand the religious result of those few years if it be remembered that Wolsey was also a typical Churchman in that day of hopeless corruption throughout the officials of the Church. It was not odd in him to seize on all manner of revenues ; to have an illegitimate daughter ; to make an abbess of her—yet to say Mass

[1] A miscarriage a few months after marriage, spring of 1510. Nine months later a son born (January 1st, 1511) ; died in two months. November, 1513, another son ; died immediately after birth. December, 1514, a son ; still-born. 1515, *probably* another miscarriage. February 18th, 1516, *Mary*, the only one who lived. All summer of 1518 the hope of a prince. But the child born (November 10th, 1518) was a daughter, who died. Catherine was now in her thirty-fourth year. She bore no more children. Henry ceased to live with her in the course of 1524.

[2] Spelling counted for nothing till the XVIIIth century, but it may be worth noting that he signed " Wulcey," and his father was written of under that spelling also, so that is how it was pronounced. In the same way, " Boleyn " was pronounced " Bullen."

regularly ; to be a bishop for revenue (of more than one see), to aim at the Papacy—and to live wholly for this world. He was one with that fatal generation which, in its upper ranks, took it as an everyday thing that the spiritual heads of Christendom should be such, till, in the issue, a general Christian conscience, acting on the mass of Christian men, was driven to demand a cleansing of the whole system. But the reform failed, as we know. It degraded, in many of the good, till it became mere personal enthusiasm ; in the bad, it led to the looting of religion ; in the worst, to a fanatical hatred of the essential Christian things : notably of the Eucharist. The persistent cry—already more than a century old at Henry's accession—for "a re-casting of the Church : head and members," turned into an anarchy of competing appetites, Messianic visions, and wild enmities. In that whirlpool Christendom foundered—for a while.

Wolsey came of substantial middle-class people in Ipswich. He was at this moment (1509) about thirty-four years old : the exact date of his birth is debatable. He had shown ability in minor capacities during his youth ; had been taken up by the Bishop of Winchester, Fox, a man active in the highest affairs of the State. He conducted a certain foreign negotiation with extraordinary secrecy, success, and despatch. Then another with Scotland. Henry VII had noted, used, and rewarded him. Henry VIII, the lad just on the throne, made him Almoner at court—a post in which he saw most of the receipts and expenditure, could advise, and exercise a great deal of powerful and indirect patronage. He had collected incomes : the parish revenue of three parishes ; a deanery (Lincoln) ; a prebend in that see ; yet another ; a living in the city (St. Bride's) ; a prebend in Hereford ; another living in Devon ; a canonry of Windsor—not spiritual charges, of course : mere dividends. But what a condition for the Church to be in ! He was by 1512 already a very rich man. The young king and his fellows frequented Wolsey's dinners also—and Wolsey was

a good boon companion (though nearly old enough to be Henry's father). It was said (perhaps falsely) that the Churchman danced and sang at these feasts. But such scandals, true or false, do not belittle him. He was head and shoulders above all else around the king, and, in the third year of the reign, was already beginning to govern.

The main factors of these last years.

To understand the seven or eight years that intervene between Henry's accession and that rising hurricane abroad which shipwrecked Christendom is not easy.

The important thing is not the recorded history of diplomacy and wars: it is the background of rapidly increasing knowledge in the sciences, but much more through travel, and by a recovery of the Greek and Roman past. The Atlantic is opened, the Cape of Africa is turned, before Henry is crowned. Ten years later Magellan set out on his famous voyage, and his lieutenant, Sebastian del Cano, lived to land at Seville—the first living man in our record to circumnavigate the globe.[1] But superficially it was a time of perpetual shifting intrigue between the various princes, and of particularly confused and changeable foreign policy in England. But there are four points which, if they are emphasised, explain the time.

First: Nothing that happens *positively* in this preliminary stage is comparable in importance to the storm which succeeded it. The *negative* factors—the *lack* of common action against the Turk, the *lack* of reform, are exceedingly important. But the direct local objects of Roman temporal court, and English, and French, and German, are shamefully inadequate to the moment. The coming Reformation quite eclipses all the papal and royal and imperial intrigues pre-

[1] It is one of the exceedingly rare errors in Lingard, the founder of all modern English history, that he regarded Drake as the first man to sail round the earth. As a fact Drake came a whole lifetime later. As is inevitable, seeing that Lingard is the great quarry from which all our official historians dig (without acknowledgment), the error became stereotyped in a hundred official text-books, and even well-educated men, if you ask them who made this memorable mark in the story of our race, will answer with the wrong date and name, Drake.

ceding it. They are like a game of cards played in a house which has caught fire, and the inhabitants of which, as they shuffle the packs, are unconscious of approaching disaster.

Second : As it turned out, the political future of these islands was largely determined by a decisive military event : the Battle of Flodden. It was Flodden which ended the royal independence of Scotland. Before Flodden, Scotland is a formidable hostile power on the northern flank of England. After Flodden, Scotland is within England's orbit.

Third : The various policies, combats, alliances of Western Europe in this brief space, all turn upon the Papacy's new (and disastrous) character of an Italian principate. It is the determination of the successive Popes of the Renaissance to triumph as princes of Italian dominions, to play a part suitable to Milan or Florence (but far beneath the duty of Universal Head), which moulds those European conflicts wherein the King of England eagerly plunges ; and it is this material splendour but spiritual degradation of the Papacy that helps to swell that indignation against the official Church which was so soon to explode.

Fourth : The fourth point is determinant. It is surprising to note how much it is still neglected, even in our general histories. Islam was at the gate.

The pressure of the Mohammedan against our civilisation had grown perpetually under the Turkish monarchs : great soldiers. Where they went they destroyed. Already, fifty years ago, they had overthrown Constantinople—yet, even under that warning, Europe, divided between its jealous rulers, would not rally. It was by the new arm of artillery, in which they step by step surpassed us, that their threat increased. All the last years of Henry VII, save in the Far West, had lain, for Europe as a whole, under that menace. Henry VII's refusal to aid (save for a small subsidy), and his jeering letter so refusing, are amongst the worst things against him. Already, when Henry VIII was not ten years old, the Turk had swept to the Adriatic. He had menaced

Venice. He had entered with his cavalry the Italian Plain. He had crossed the Tagliamento. He had reached Vicenza.

There came a lull, indeed, while he was securing his rule over his co-religionists in the Levant; but he had defeated a Christian fleet at sea within hail almost of the Occident. He had stormed Otranto, captured the Gulf of Corinth. The future was with him. In a few years he was to subject Hungary, to drive us from the Balkans, and to besiege Vienna itself.

This overwhelming cloud (whose shadow we have forgotten) was the chief feature of all that time. By paralysing the imperial authority it made the Reformation possible.

First activities of Henry VIII.

For two years young Henry took his fill. To please the people he had his father's financial agents, Empson and Dudley, attainted and put to death on a ridiculously false charge of treason, which no one believed. Their names had become one of those popular legends which it is so easy to attach to mere names; for every one, rich and poor, who chafed under the heavy demands of Henry VII had a vague grudge against his agents. Their real crime was to have carried out the law strictly, and to have been efficient civil servants in a time of fiscal oppression. So they were put to death. But this detestable act (which Catherine tried to prevent) was not intended to have its pretended effect. The treasury kept the fines, and the king saw to it that their heirs should not suffer. They were restored; and Dudley's fortune it was which later gave the power to John Dudley (Northumberland), under Edward VI, and to Leicester (Robert Dudley), under Elizabeth. For Northumberland was Dudley's son, Leicester his grandson.

In such acts, in general and vague promises, in frequent public shows and jousts where his own skill was applauded, the young king sought and obtained general admiration. He did little else.

But he desired to play a part in Europe, and his chance came in 1512.

The Pope of the day was Julian della Rovere, Julius II, nephew of one Pope, active and militant enemy of another; a pluralist, after the fashion of that corrupt, magnificent time, but in a degree quite exceptional and scandalous. He was holding, shortly before his election, four episcopal sees and one archiepiscopal, none of which he occupied, all of which gave him revenues, and which were scattered here and there and chosen for their wealth. He had been elected—not without bribery—in 1503, already sixty years old, and appeared at once, in spite of his age, as a soldier.

England's policy abroad from 1512.

A Pope of the moment should have concentrated on the crusted abuses in the Church which threatened to bring down Europe; on the prevention of spiritual Revolution and Ruin. He should have prevented the attack by the elimination of any excuse for it. He should (and did at the end of his life) have also insisted on the crying need of withstanding the victorious Mohammedan. But immediate policy absorbed him. For all seemed secure. Julian, like every other ruler before a catastrophe, saw nothing. It seemed natural to him to aggrandise his principate and worldly power by arms: save Italy from perpetual invasion rather than to reform. First he had formed (in 1510, by what is called the League of Cambrai, because its negotiators met in that town) a great alliance against Venice, the strongest State in Italy, and one that threatened the borders of his own. The emperor, who claimed from Venice certain North Italian lands, the King of France, Louis XII, who held the Milanese; Ferdinand of Castille, who held the South, and would drive the Venetians from certain southern ports of that land (Brindisi, Otranto, etc.)—these came in and broke the Venetian power. Julius at once changed front, secretly allied himself with Venice, and challenged France at Milan. The French besieged him in Bologna, and called a council against him at Pisa. He countered by forming yet another alliance against *them*, of Ferdinand, of Venice, of the emperor. Ferdinand persuaded his young son-in-law, Henry VIII, who needed little

persuasion for adventure, and thus the crown of England found itself in the thick of a European war. Henry claimed for his share—a mere flourish—the old continental Plantagenet fiefs, and declared war on June 3rd, 1512.

What followed was the complete success of Julius. The French, unable to stand such pressure, were out of Italy by the end of the year; but the English action, though it did something towards that result, was of no advantage to England. It took the form of a combined attack with Henry's father-in-law, Ferdinand of Spain, on South-Western France. The English armies were held up, the Spanish conquered Navarre, south of the Pyrenees: a permanent possession still held.

The next year, 1513, there was English action on a much larger scale, and nearer provisionment and base. With 25,000 Englishmen in Flanders, and large German contingents under the emperor himself, Henry besieged Therouanne,[1] drove off the French easily in a panic rout called "the Battle of the Spurs," took the place on August 22nd, and the great commercial city of Tournai, with a large ransom a month later, after a siege of only a week. Tournai accepted an English garrison.[2]

It was a fine show, but deplorable foreign policy.

I cannot believe that Wolsey—who accompanied the army in great state—really approved of all this expensive and futile English action overseas. He was still climbing: he had to support rather than guide his unstable young master (though he was beginning to guide him)—and perhaps he had not yet a grasp of the situation.

It is clear that Henry, all through, was being used. His father-in-law used him in 1512 to help him get hold of

[1] The town was destroyed forty years later by Charles V. It was a few miles south of St. Omer on the Lys. A village preserves its name.

[2] As though to emphasise his triumph, Henry got the Pope to give Wolsey the vacant bishopric of the see. But he never occupied it, and soon took a pension in place.

Navarre, the Pope used him by mere flatteries and absurd titles (promising he should be "Most Christian King" in the place of Louis XII of France !). Above all, Maximilian the Emperor used him, bamboozling him grossly by calling himself a mere "volunteer," giving Henry nominal command of the army, and getting the English expedition to destroy French influence in the Flemish towns without any permanent reward for the English crown.

But life is not calculable. Luck rules it. The folly of this brilliant campaign had a repercussion, unintended, accidental, which proved to be the turning-point in the unity of Britain. What the Roman Empire had not done, what all effort since Rome had failed to achieve—was made possible by the Battle of Flodden : and Flodden was the direct result of Henry's joining the alliance against France. If Scotland is not to-day a separate realm from England, as is Portugal from Spain, if the island is now one nation, it is due to Flodden.

Without a virtual unity of religion, indeed, such political unity would be impossible. But the Scotch Reformation, an English achievement, built on the foundation of Flodden. But for Flodden Scotland would be Catholic to-day, and had not Thomas Cromwell destroyed the English monasteries England would be Catholic to-day ; but, on account of Flodden, a Catholic England and Scotland would have been united, as are a Protestant England and Scotland to-day.

There was, of necessity, common action between the Scotch and the French crowns when the latter was at war with the King of England, for the essential feeling of all Scotch kings and their people for centuries had been to hold out against English claims to suzerainty. In the crisis and pressure of 1512, Louis XII called upon the King of Scotland, James IV, brother-in-law to the English king. In 1513 James IV invaded England, moved also by irritation at the retention of certain valuables by Henry, and by the capture

of Scottish ships. They say that unearthly voices warned his army of its doom.

That army was large—perhaps 80,000 men, of which, say, at least half were armed men and more or less trained. It was moved slowly, giving the English commander (Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, the son and representative of that first Duke of Norfolk, who had fallen at Bosworth, and whose title had been lost by attainder) time to get together a well-disciplined and compact force of 26,000 men. The Scotch crossed the Tweed and put up huts and tents for a permanent position on the Hill of Flodden (called so after a little hamlet at its foot), which is some four or five miles from the crossing of the Tweed. The height looks out eastward over the open valley of the Till, dominating it by some 500 feet.

Battle of Flodden, September 9th, 1513.

Surrey, who after the custom of the time had offered battle on a fixed date, came up from the South, saw the Scottish guns on the edge of the height, begged James to come down and fight on the plain. That was on Wednesday, September 7th. He had for answer that James would await his arrival on the day appointed—which was Friday, September 9th.

Surrey (at his son's counsel) turned the position. He marched north along the Till valley all the Thursday, crossed at Twizel Mill bridge at sunrise of the Friday, September 9th, and came down south (a march of about 5 miles) all that day. James set fire to the huts on Flodden Hill (the wind, from the south-west, blew the smoke towards the advancing English), and formed his force on a height just to the northward, Brankston Hill. The English rearguard could not come up till mid-afternoon—for the Mill bridge was narrow—and it was not till after four that, the Scotch having advanced down the hill, contact was taken.

The big business was over in little more than an hour, decided in the main by English archery. The Scotch army was dissolved; its seventeen fine guns captured, "*les plus belles que j'ai viz oncques*," wrote young Howard. Ten

thousand Scots lay dead after the rout, and, among them, with the best of his nobility, their king. His body was found, taken to Berwick, brought for burial to London, wrapped in lead—and then forgotten. It was last seen in a lumber-room at Shene, after the dissolution of the monasteries.

The blow was final. On the throne of Scotland was a baby of just over a year old. Around him a hungry, unscrupulous guard of nobles. The country began to be torn between French and English attractions. The new reign lasted but thirty years, of which the king was king for barely fourteen, and left for heir yet another baby, a girl not a week old. She was to be that Mary whom the Reformation nobles imprisoned and killed in England a lifetime on. It was at Flodden that the true national monarchy of the Scots people fell. It never rose again.

But men cannot know their future. All that Flodden was to mean lay hidden from them at the moment. One small, perhaps—or detailed—but significant thing Flodden did. It restored the half-royal Howards. Surrey was allowed to resume the attainted title of Duke of Norfolk. He was granted new arms. He had deserved them. He had won that field in his seventieth year. Still, the Howards were too dangerous to the Crown! Another was to be killed by royal mandate within a lifetime, and the dukedom of Norfolk to remain forfeited till the XVIIth century: nearly a hundred years after.

What more concerned Henry was the discovery that he had been duped on the continent. Even while he was preparing for another French campaign, in the fighting season of 1514, he learnt that Louis XII of France had bought off the emperor with Milan, and that Ferdinand was content with Navarre. As for Julius, he was dead, and the Medici who had succeeded him as Leo X made peace with Louis in his turn at the price of the French king's dropping schism and abandoning the Pope's private antagonists.

Louis had one card more to play, and played it. But it killed him. He had bought off Maximilian (the emperor), the Pope, Ferdinand. To Henry, thus isolated, he, being a widower, offered alliance by marrying Mary, the English king's young sister. She was sixteen, Louis was fifty-seven; three months after the wedding he was dead. As for Mary, she married an old lover, Brandon, whom her brother had made Duke of Suffolk—we shall see later what effect this had on the succession to the Crown of England.

Louis XII had died on New Year's Day of 1515. He was succeeded by a cousin, young Francis. The new French alliance into which Henry, somewhat bewildered, had fallen, was disturbed by what that young man did. He took up the old Italian adventure, pushed over the Alps, won the expensive battle of Marignano (September 13th), and seized Milan.

This crisis had forwarded a thing that seemed unimportant to Europe as yet: that was to prove very important to England. Leo X, the Pope, knowing how Wolsey now counted in England, and eager for the English alliance against France, made Wolsey a Cardinal.

Wolsey in power.

For a year he had refused or delayed, though Henry, who had already made this statesman Archbishop of York, urged him. But now he had an object, and the decision was taken. It was much more than a mere honour or title: it was the prelude of all that Wolsey was to do actively in Church affairs, with high intelligence and with wide views, but mainly for ill. He asked privately that, when the cardinalate should be given him, he might be made Papal Legate in England—that is, given all power to visit monasteries, to reform, to judge Church cases, to act at will.

The decree raising him to the cardinalate came on September 10th, 1515. He was installed in Westminster Abbey with gorgeous ceremonial on November 18th. Next month, three days before Christmas, he was Chancellor, and supreme in England: a man more capable of ruling than one ruler in

ten thousand. The legateship, though the king was certainly known to favour the request, was delayed a little—but it was soon to come. Wolsey, in complete power, did many things, but one in especial must be noted.

There had been no little enquiry into the monastic system and claims to reform and discipline it in the immediate past, including one very bad report on St. Albans under Henry VII. Wolsey obtained leave from Rome to suppress a number of small monasteries in order to found a new and magnificent college of his own at Oxford, and he employed in the work of examining and destroying these lesser establishments an able, punctual, industrious man whom he had discovered—one Thomas Cromwell.

So much for one effect of the French stroke. It put Wolsey so high that soon he was aiming at the Papacy itself.

Another effect of the French stroke was more theatrical, and came to nothing. It belongs to the next year, 1516.

The expedition had all to be done again! Maximilian the Emperor tried to take back Milan—he could not pay his army. The empire was not a true taxable *State:* its few great members were really independent, as were its swarm of petty lords and its towns. The Emperor, as such, was a great but always embarrassed name, and lacking funds. His forces mutinied. He proposed next year (1516), if only Henry would come in again, to give *him* Milan, and resign to him the imperial crown! The fantastic bait was rejected.

So things were moving, with the eyes of contemporaries fixed for two years upon the large and outwardly important things of the time, and particularly on the renewal of French power in Italy, when a date of far greater significance than Marignano arrived and passed.

On All Saints' Day, November 1st, 1517, the students and people of Wittenburg, in Saxony, found fixed on the door of the Castle Chapel, the usual board for such academic programmes, a document in ninety-five short theses, put forward as doubts for discussion on a certain matter already

much debated among the people. It was the act of an energetic Augustinian monk, then in his thirty-fifth year: Martin Luther.

. . . . . .

The outbreak of religious chaos in Germany, 1517.

There was nothing singular or momentous in the affixing of university theses thus in a public place: it was a custom which the German universities, proceeding from the Italian and French, had used for generations. Nor were Luther's theses provocative, as those who have never read them universally imagine. Many of them were theologically excellent, and all were debatable as Catholic positions: they did no more than suggest discussion on some practices in connection with indulgences, which were certainly abuses, and others which might well be argued to be such. They were put forward as doubts to be resolved, not as protests. But they denounced the greed of the papal court, and the exaggeration of its latest source of revenue.

Suddenly there arose from that moment, what Luther himself had never dreamed of—a prodigious movement throughout all German-speaking lands which became a roaring river and floated him on the crest of its wave. The noise it made was a confused babel of protests against, not the Papacy alone, but a hundred forms of European tradition.

The Humanists—that is, the ardent drinkers in of the new classical revival, the discoverers of pagan beauty; the adventurers; the new spirits full of the new flood of discovery; memories of the old struggle between the incompetent and distorted German vision of empire and the full religion of Europe, centred in Rome; men wearied of complexity; men shocked at clerical corruption; men sickened by the lack of spirituality; enthusiasts, looters, a swarm of temporal rulers small and great, who itched for the spoils of Church property—all these streams converged into a torrent which threatened to swamp our European religious unity, that by which we had lived. What to-day we call "The Reformation" was

afoot in the Germanies : their reaction against a civilisation which had been but partly absorbed in so much of Germanic land.

It grew at top speed during eight years. Within two, marks of heresy had appeared ; in 1520 Luther and his were excommunicate ; in 1521 his books condemned and burnt—and by that time what had been but an enormous protest and half political revolt was already a confused and embryonic religion. Within a decade the movement was to have fixed establishment and arms under civil princes, and, with the disruption of the Germanies, that of Christendom itself had begun.

The tale of all that and an examination of its spirit belong to my next volume. All I have to do here, in conclusion to the Middle Ages of Catholic England, is to note that England itself remained unaffected, tardy as, from her position, she had always been to receive a wave from the continent. Less than any part of the West was England stirred or touched by the loud and universal quarrel now arisen abroad. The attempts at social revolution in the empire contrasted with a profound social peace in England, and the excited ubiquitous debate on doctrine and on the nature of the Church, with a complete acquiescence : hardly broken by some obscure fanatic here or there who had heard of the tumult far away, or by some university intellectual disgusted with old routine. Humanism, the new scholarship, was fully felt in England : but heresy, so far, hardly at all.

The spiritual situation of this country in the years 1517-25 might be compared to those still and broad reaches of a river, lake-like, unhurried, which are often found some few hundred yards above a cataract. There was no sign of approaching disruption ; no desire for it, of course, but not even any dread, let alone expectation of it. Had you told an Englishman of 1517-25 that the Catholic faith was in danger *here* he would have thought you mad.

But there is this essential point in which the metaphor

of the calm reach above the plunge of water fails : the cascade in nature takes place from a configuration of land already present, and creating a result inevitable. In the England of 1517-25 no such natural dispositions were to be seen ; no obvious occasion for change was apparent. There seemed no way by which continental disturbances (themselves apparently ephemeral) could reach these shores. They were quite alien to the nation's habits and desires. It was at that moment singularly free from social discontent ; it had no political quarrel with Rome, it was (at last) under a united rule without faction to grasp at disorder. Its ecclesiastical appointments were—on the whole—better than those in most of its neighbours ; its clerical revenues and lives less scandalous ; its dynasty, though vulgar and new, was already popular ; its king more popular still ; its central government as universally obeyed as the Empire's was weak and despised.

Indeed, Henry seemed specially designed by his headship of such a people at such a moment to write (in 1521) in person a defence of the Catholic faith—just as an English statesman of Victorian days would have seemed specially fitted to voice a European protest against Socialist revolution. He did so, not without skill in Latinity,[1] and received as a personal title for life from the grateful Leo X the title of " Fidei Defensor."

But (once again) men do not intend the ultimate consequences of their own acts : they cannot foresee them. And in those years certain acts of the human will were committed by certain human beings—Henry and a woman—which, in their result, transformed the whole of English people.

Episode of Anne Boleyn.

Henry determined to possess himself of the person of Anne Boleyn. Anne Boleyn, grasping the opportunity, determined to use this passion for her own ends and to become queen.

[1] The book is a charming specimen of printing in that day, and the original issue in contemporary binding, perhaps Henry's own copy, is among the treasures of the London Library.

That is the origin of England's prolonged and tortured passage from her ancient foundations to a mind and character wholly new—so that, to Englishmen of to-day, the Catholic England of a thousand years is a foreign country.

Nothing could have more horrified and disgusted Henry than the society his own act was to produce. As for Anne, she had not his devotion to doctrine—or to anything—but nothing would have seemed to her stranger than the society which was, in the long run, to arise as the fruit of her determination. Henry and Anne between them ultimately bred, in the process of nearly a century, Protestant England.

Because she would be queen the divorce of Henry from Catherine, intended for an international alliance, was deflected and degraded into the domestic tragi-comedy of a court. Because she would be queen, her resistance drove his uncontrolled mind and body to a monomania : hence the hesitating approach to that enormous thing, a breach—temporary it might be—with the common communion of Christendom. Hence also Thomas Cromwell's opportunity for a sudden fortune. Hence the seizure of Church property. Hence the new millionaires created out of Church loot—the Cecils, the Pagets, the Russells, and the rest : hence their determination that the old religion should never return. Hence the slow, tenacious, difficult effort on their part to uproot the profoundly rooted, ancient growth called Catholic England.

They succeeded—but it took them two very long lifetimes, almost two centuries, to succeed. They were not quite secure till 1688. They did not breathe freely till after 1715.

I leave it to my next volume to deal with the detailed story of Henry's infatuation for Anne, with his change of character under that influence, with the whole affair and its consequences.

This volume I conclude with no more than a brief summary of the original process wherein her power over him originated.

Origin of Henry's infatuation for Anne.

All is here difficult to determine, and that from the lack of direct evidence or from contradiction in it, or from discrepancy. The facts of Henry's attraction, of her refusal to be his mistress, of his inability to turn away, of her compelling him (therefore) to make her his wife at the cost of all, are indisputable. But the dates can be established to the best of our judgment only: for all was secret; and even the love-letters of the king have only survived by some strange accident to prove how late was the date of Anne's final surrender on the strict condition that she should be queen.

Anne Boleyn (the name pronounced and often written "Bullen") was the daughter of a Sir Thomas Boleyn, a wealthy man already of landed estate, but of merchant origin: the grandson of a Lord Mayor of London. But she counted as a Howard—that was her social point, for Sir Thomas' wealth had attracted the sister of the Duke of Norfolk, whom he married, and who was Anne's mother. It is as a Howard that we must always think of Anne and of her position at the court.

She was born some short time after the year 1500—probably in 1502, perhaps 1503—certainly not 1507, as Camden has misled those to state who do not sufficiently use common sense in history. She was, therefore, about twelve years younger than Henry. She was vivacious, black-haired, dark-eyed, evidently attractive—for many desired her—and undoubtedly cold: a temperament which helped her at once to despise and play upon the passions of men, and particularly of such men as Henry, weak with sensuality. She was better trained in French than in English, having spent her formative years at the French court. French was presumably her natural tongue, and it was in French that Henry wooed her. She had a deformity, a sixth finger on one hand: it is worth noting such slight physical abnormality in connection with the fortunes of her daughter Elizabeth.

She returned to England at the age of twenty or so, in 1522: a late age at which to remain unmarried in that day

and in that rank. She set her cap at young Percy, heir to the great house of Northumberland, and caught him. They were privately engaged.

This gives us our first date. For it is certain that the king, on hearing of the engagement, made Wolsey intervene to break it off. Henry had already marked her, not of course for a wife, but for a possible and desirable mistress. He had already lived with her sister Mary Boleyn (and married her off—with a mean present—to a plain gentleman, Mr. Carey), and it would seem that the family type was to his taste. It would never have done for the young woman to be in so high a place as Percy's wife. Henry had perhaps already ceased to live with Catherine. Certainly he never lived with her after 1524, when her health finally broke down.

Now this intervention by Henry to prevent Anne's marriage cannot have been later than the summer of 1523—August at the latest ; for there is a letter of September 12th, 1523, stating Percy's new engagement.

Anne was sent off to her father's moated house of Hever in Kent in a sort of disgrace. Why ? Presumably because she had refused herself to the king ; but we cannot fix a date in 1524 on which that refusal had begun to work upon Henry's mind sufficiently to make him open to any such monstrous suggestion as a divorce and marriage with her.

What date can we first find in which something happened which may make us conclude that Henry is no longer at issue with Anne, but reconciled to her present refusal on the terms of a future marriage, and therefore contemplating such a marriage—though slow at first to face the consequences ?

I think that date is June 18th, 1525, when Sir Thomas Boleyn was made a peer (the title was Viscount Rochford).

Henry had already (apparently) made Anne valuable presents of jewellery. She was no longer in disgrace. She was certainly in his favour. As certainly she was not his mistress (the much later letters with their definite statements of expectation prove that). Therefore I conclude that a

bargain had been struck between them, and that the sudden and high promotion of her father on July 18th, 1525, is the latest, and also the best, date on which to fix the beginning of a new era in England.

It is true that Boleyn had great wealth and an excellent connection, through the Ormondes.[1] It is true that he had married a semi-royal Howard.[2]

It is true that the king, having had Mary for a mistress, might naturally honour her father without question of Anne. It is true that Boleyn had been in great and important employment such as might naturally lead to a peerage. Nevertheless, taking all the surroundings together, I think the most just conclusion is that in this summer of 1525 the king, hitherto refused by Anne, received some *conditional* assurance of later satisfaction, had begun to envisage a regular connection, and therefore gave Boleyn his new great position.

Presumed date of Henry's pact with Anne, June, 1525.

I take, therefore, the date June 18th, 1525, as the beginning of that plan on Henry and Anne's part, the consummation of which changed England wholly, and cut the nation off from its past by a revolution more profound than any other ancient province of our civilisation has ever suffered.

There remain to be considered three points: First, was Henry's health already affected? Secondly, when did the project of annulling his marriage with Catherine of Aragon originate? Thirdly, by whom was that project suggested?

[1] The lineage shows thus:—

Sir Geoffrey Boleyn, Lord Mayor of London in 1457 = daughter of Lord Hoo of Hastings

Sir William Boleyn = daughter of the Irish Butlers, Ormonde

Sir Thomas Boleyn (born 1477) = daughter of the Earl of Surrey, victor of Flodden, later Duke of Norfolk

Anne

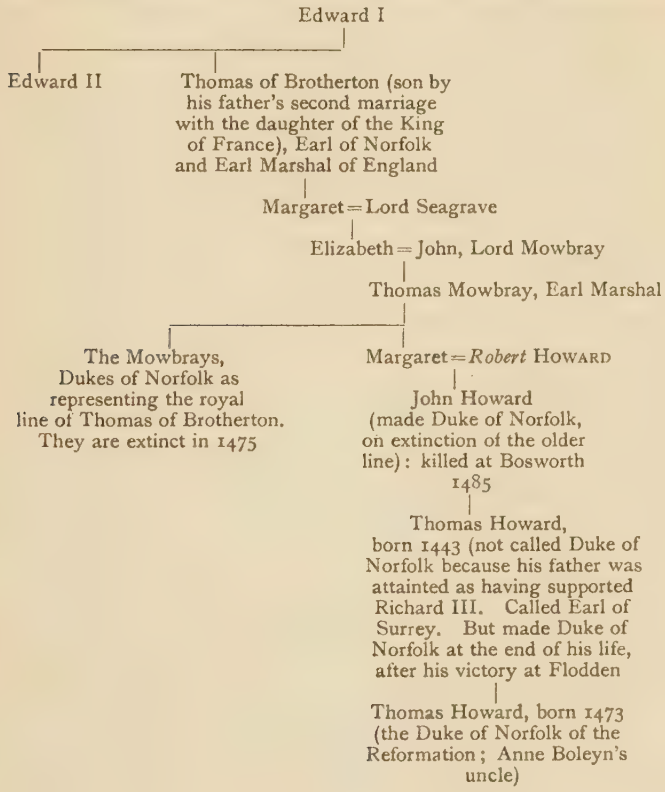
[2] See opposite page for footnote.

On all three we are left in this position : that we can fix inferior dates (i.e. *latest* dates), that *positive* evidence of exact date is lacking, but that probabilities can be weighed and give certain fairly close results.

Henry's disease : when did it originate ?

As to his illness, we are least informed. Henry caught early in life in his debaucheries the dreadful disease which came to us from America at the end of the xvth century, of which many of his contemporaries died, and which, after ravaging our European stock for centuries, now seems at last to be declining in its virulence. Syphilis impaired his health, ruined his temper and judgment, and, added to his

[2] The descent of the Howards, showing why the Dukes of Norfolk under the Tudors were held to represent a royal line and counted with the claimant families :—


Edward I
Edward II
Thomas of Brotherton (son by his father's second marriage with the daughter of the King of France), Earl of Norfolk and Earl Marshal of England
Margaret = Lord Seagrave
Elizabeth = John, Lord Mowbray
Thomas Mowbray, Earl Marshal
The Mowbrays, Dukes of Norfolk as representing the royal line of Thomas of Brotherton. They are extinct in 1475
Margaret = *Robert* HOWARD
John Howard (made Duke of Norfolk, on extinction of the older line) : killed at Bosworth 1485
Thomas Howard, born 1443 (not called Duke of Norfolk because his father was attainted as having supported Richard III. Called Earl of Surrey. But made Duke of Norfolk at the end of his life, after his victory at Flodden
Thomas Howard, born 1473 (the Duke of Norfolk of the Reformation ; Anne Boleyn's uncle)

lack of restraint, left him at the end hardly sane. But when did its effects begin to tell on him? We can judge by the children. All probably showed the hereditary taint: even Mary, conceived as early as 1515, was abnormal. In the later-born Elizabeth and Edward, the effects of that evil inheritance are as obvious as they are in the correspondingly diseased last Valois kings of France.

The only thing that makes a searcher hesitate is the young Duke of Richmond, Henry's bastard, born in 1519. He is described as seeming of better blood. But he died early, and seems to have been delicate and ailing after reaching maturity.

The date of the first mooting of a divorce.

As to the date when the annulment of his marriage in the papal court was first imagined, we are on surer ground. Princess Mary was offered in marriage to Charles V. Charles reproached Henry with offering him a princess (then eight years old) whom *he contemplated bastardising*. But Charles V was married by 1525. The divorce was therefore contemplated some time before, or early in that year, and that fits in exactly with the date after which it was fully known to Henry that Catherine of Aragon could bear him no more children, *and* with the secret Anne Boleyn affair.

Its author.

But who made the first suggestion? That again must remain conjecture. But our best witness is Pole, truthful, acquainted with all court details, safe from Henry's vengeance at the time he wrote. He tells us that Anne sent certain emissaries to suggest it to the king, and that she was the true authoress of the idea. That also fits in with dates and (most important) with what we know of the characters involved.

We may conclude the long story of Catholic England, then, with some confidence at this date in the summer of 1525. By that time Henry and Anne had presumably made some secret pact, by that time the projected annulment of Henry's marriage with Catherine had certainly reached a foreign court; and, presumably again, on the best evidence we have, Anne herself originated that suggestion.

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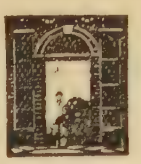

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